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## THE YEARS.

A SHIMMER of white robes — a pall just after, —  
Then, bits of song and victors' shout, anon;  
Now fast, now slow — with mingled wail and  
laughter

The motley, weird procession moveth on, —  
And still from out the shadowy, dim "To Be"  
Another — and another year glides stealthily.

O phantom train! Your chill breath dulls our  
pleasures;

Your footprints leave the furrows and the  
frost;

With ruthless hand ye gather up our treasures  
Till in the mist of "by-gones" they are lost!  
And darkening windows, closing portals show  
The daughters of sweet harmony brought low!

And yet, O passing years! O grim procession!  
A lavish store ye tossed into our hands —

Rare gems, tried gold — ah yes! we make con-  
fession,

Your gifts well balanced all your stern de-  
mands.

And many an offered prize our idle fingers lost  
Because, all heedlessly, we slumbered at our  
post!

Then fair, fresh, laughing year, with light steps  
gliding

Out of the mystic shade — the veiled Un-  
known —

In childlike faith, in patient hope abiding,  
We place warm, welcome hands within thine  
own!

Your touch may thrill and brighten — or may  
loose the silver cord;

It matters not — we know thee — an envoy  
from our Lord! B. E. E.

## OUR LOST PET.

SHE went what time the birds of passage  
sought

The sunny south, our first and only love;

A short and pleasant loan, who only brought  
Joy to our hearts awhile, then soared above.

A star dropped where nought star-like long  
may be —

Fair as a day-old flow'ret washed in dew,  
With eyes so clear, we fancied we could see  
Her soul — the Angel in her — shining  
through.

Departed hath she, like the first light snow,

Quick melted in the early winter sun;

And all of her we evermore may know

Is, that a marvellous sight hath come and  
gone.

For now, left lonely as we are again,

Our only darling, gone beyond recall,

Is unto us a vision in the brain,

A dream within the heart, and that is all.

Chambers' Journal.

## ORPHANHOOD.

THE shadow of the forest trees —

My childhood withered 'neath their spell,  
In the old home remembered well,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees

Between me and the black sky spread,  
As I lay waking on my bed,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees —

I wept and struggled for the light,  
But all around was black as night,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees

Robbed us of life's enchanting plays;  
Both heart and stream were dark as night,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees —

We heard of love and of the sun,  
But in our gloomy world were none,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees —

One morn they quivered in the blast,  
Wild moaned the storm, and broke at last  
The shadow of the trees.

The shadow of the forest trees —

'Mid tossing branches struggling through,  
I hailed a sky of happy blue  
Unshadowed by the trees.

The shadow of the forest trees

No longer hushed the streamlet's song,  
In fierce wild mirth it sped along,  
Unshadowed by the trees.

The shadow of the forest trees

Clouded no more my heaven above;  
My heart awoke to raptured love,  
Unshadowed by the trees.

Alas! alas! the forest trees —

Once more the time grew dark and still,  
Murmured no more the poor lone rill,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

Alas! alas! the forest trees —

Again they closed around my head,  
And love and hope and joy were dead,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

Alas! alas! the forest trees —

The wind that woke the stream is past,  
This heart, wild beating, breaks at last,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

The shadow of the forest trees —

Alas for heart! alas for stream!  
But both have had one blessed gleam,  
Unshadowed by the trees.

Despite the shadow of the trees,

The heart has loved, the stream has sung,  
Now let their mournful knell be rung,  
Shadowed by forest trees.

ISA BLAGDEN.

From The Cornhill Magazine.

PARISIAN JOURNALISTS OF TO-DAY.

WILL the reflective reader ask himself why it is that French journalists absorb so much larger a share of public attention than the newspaper writers of other countries? They are not more argumentative than the English, they are unquestionably less wise than Germans, they yield to the Americans in the versatility of polemical invective, and even to the Irish in their favourite art of screaming about nothing; as to epigrammatic wit, the Italians with their pasquinades are, in this respect, more than their masters. Frenchmen themselves explain the interest they excite by pretending that they are the leaders of human thought; but this is a little piece of vanity with not much truth in it. The French are great adapters and magnifiers of other men's ideas, but their genius is not of the inventive sort. All that is practical in their political theories comes to them from England or America; and when the Communalists raised the standard of rebellion in the name of what seemed to them a new and indispensable right—that is local self-government—they were only claiming an institution which has flourished in Britain for now five hundred years. Even in philosophy, the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century, who are credited by their countrymen with having been the first apostles of rationalism, did nothing but follow the lead of Hobbes and Locke; and as their writings were at bottom rather attacks upon Popery and the Jesuits than deliberate impeachments of the Christian dogma, it may be said that they were virtually continuers of the Reformation. The Revolutionists of '93 certainly seemed to go a good way in experimental novelty, but there is scarcely a single one of their vagaries which, if we look to it, can be accepted as original. When they beheaded their king and republicanized the calendar they repeated acts perpetrated with much less fuss and disorder by the Roundheads; their Rights of Man were a plagiarism—on paper, for few of the "Rights" took living effect—of *Magna Charta* and of the *Retti del Popolo* promulgated by Thomas Aniello (Masaniel-

lo) at Naples in 1648; their Goddess Reason had been imagined so far back as 1535 by that Anabaptist fanatic John Bokkold—better known as John of Leyden—who stirred up Munster against its bishop-prince, and held anarchical revels in the city for six months; and even that queerest of Republican innovations, which consisted in placing military commanders under the constant supervision of civil commissioners, was simply borrowed from the Dutch, whose meddlesome deputies, as we know, hampered and plagued Marlborough almost to perdition. France, it may be urged, has artistic and literary renown, a great name in science, immense military glory, and a moral influence reaching far beyond the confines of her own territory; but these again are catch phrases which do not bear very close examination. France has owned neither a Michael Angelo nor a Rubens, a Dante nor a Shakespeare, a Galileo nor a Newton, a Mozart nor a Rossini. As to military glory, before Napoleon, who was a Corsican, vanquished the armies of disunited and distracted Germany, the military annals of France offered a long series of such crushing defeats as Cressy, Poitiers, Agincourt, Pavia, Blenheim, Ramillies, Malplaquet, Oudenarde, and Rosbach, only chequered, here and there, by a few easy triumphs over weak neighbours, or by noisy internecine struggles, so that now-a-day partisans of the white flag are reduced to boasting over the one victory of Fontenoy, which was gained not by a Frenchman, but by Marshal Saxe, a German. Turning now to moral influence, we see that whereas an Englishman finds his language, literature, and institutions thriving over a third of the globe, and whereas Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutchmen, and Germans can point to prosperous settlements of their founding in North and South America, Africa and Australia, Frenchmen have done so little to propagate their name and customs by colonizing, that Algeria itself would retain not a trace of them if once the garrisons were removed. To be sure all these circumstances need not constitute a reason why we English should be indifferent to the

French, but they make us wonder why such a comparatively inferior nation should arouse so much more attention than ourselves, as they undoubtedly do. Great as our own power, and successful as our own institutions may be, we, as Englishmen, cannot be in perpetual adoration before them; but that foreign States should rank us rather below than on a line with the French, and should have done so from time immemorial, both when France reared her head and crowed and when she lay bruised under our feet, is a mysterious thing which can only be accounted for by seeking the causes of France's popularity outside her actual achievements or deserts.

But we need not search far. Frenchmen owe their popularity not so much to their qualities as to their defects, though it should be noticed that their defects, being exempt from hypocrisy, often wear an honester look than other people's virtues. If the French affected British propriety, German gravity, Spanish superciliousness, or if they were servile as the Italians, we might speak in severe terms of their ungovernable natures, their inordinate bumptiousness, factiousness, and immorality. But how be angry with men who are the first to laugh at their own vices, and who yet retain self-respect enough to show that they think none the worse of themselves for being sinners? It is in this inner consciousness of innocence that lies the great charm of the French; they do wrong, but there is such a smiling candour in their waywardness that it disarms censure. British and German vice is an ugly thing because it is underhand and cloaked with a pretence of respectability which renders it doubly offensive. If we look at a crowd of young English people disporting themselves loosely in a casino, we see at once by their constrained attitudes or by their boisterous gaiety that they are ill at ease and trying to stifle the prickings of their consciences which tell them that they are misbehaving themselves. Some, perhaps, are cynically dissolute, but the majority are ashamed of themselves, and will slink away from the place of riot, dreading to be seen, and consequently

throwing upon themselves and their dissipation an air wholly disreputable. In the same way a young Spaniard who stalks off grandly from a house of debauchery to pay his orisons at the shrine of his patron Saint, and, who, in speaking to a tailor whose bill he does not intend to pay, adopts a tone of grandiloquent haughtiness, is a grotesque creature exciting little sympathy. But a Frenchman who laughingly brags that he has got the better of his tailor, and French people of both sexes who revel at casinos, are all in their ways funny and seductive; because there is not one among them, man or woman, but feels that his or her mission in this life is amusement, and that there is no reason to make a secret of the matter. Viewed in this light Frenchmen occupy towards the rest of the world the position filled in private circles by those merry, bright-witted rakes who, with impunity, do and say things for which steadier persons would be ostracised. They are in fact the spoiled children of this earth, whom we love in our own despite, and towards whose extravagances, political and social, we shall always feel indulgently. We do not envy them their institutions, and often, aloud, we thank Heaven that we are not as these men are; but, inwardly, we rejoice that there should be a nation ever ready to put our own unspoken thoughts into words, and to fling stones for us at the many fallacies, humbugs, and prejudices which we dare not assail ourselves. In this respect the encouragements we bestow on the French resemble not only the kindness we cherish for rakes, but also the patronage which noblemen of old used to vouchsafe to court jesters, whom they egged on to say spiteful things and to play pranks against big people who could not be molested otherwise. If the jester was whipped for his pains, the nobles put on a virtuous expression which seemed to say that he had quite deserved it; and so we, when the French have got into trouble through trying, with our warm approval, to effect something—say a Revolution or the establishment of a Republic—which we have not the slightest desire to see at-



tempted on our shores ; so we moralize finely over their failure, and say : " What could you expect of such a people ? " After the cruel humiliations of their late war and the Commune it looked as if the French had awoke to a sense of the cat's-paw part they had been made to play by other nations, and their serious writers inveighed in bitter terms against the foreigners who had always goaded them on to ridiculous or perilous adventures at home and abroad, and then left them in the lurch. " Foreigners," they said, " were delighted to see us liberate the Italians, but they gave us no help, and would have given us none if our generous folly had drawn down on us, as it very nearly did, a coalition of all Germany. It pleased them again to see us try to civilize Mexico, and found there an empire which should check the United States ; but they left us to manage this, as also the settlement of the Roman question, single-handed ; just as they would have had us, single-handed, go forth to free the Poles, defend the Danes, and save Saxony and Hanover from being swallowed up. As to home matters, foreigners seem to regard our country as an insensible body politic on which the most venturesome experiments can be practised as *in corpore vili* ; and demagogues like Gambetta, Louis Blanc, and Delescluze are enthusiastically applauded by the very men who are loudest in denouncing the Radicals of their own lands. We have been pricked on, in short, to act as the Quixotes and clowns of Europe ; and if now and then we appeared to lead other nations, we did so only like those unlucky sappers who walk in the van of armies. It is not the sappers who have settled the line of march ; those who did that are behind, but the sappers are sent in front to clear the way and run the risks of ambush."

This is the substance of what Frenchmen wrote in the first hours that followed defeat ; but their fit of perspicacity was short-lived. Now that thirty months have elapsed, they have resumed their old habit of laughing at themselves and at others, of blustering, quarrelling, cutting capers, and shouting ; and Europe

surveys them with the same wondering curiosity as before, setting them down for a people who are decidedly incorrigible, and who, victorious or beaten, will continue to amuse, frighten, and scandalize other nations to the end of the chapter. This being so, it may please the reader to be introduced familiarly to the score or so of journalists who sway French people, such as they are, and make up what is popularly called " the great voice of the French Press." The present writer speaks of them from personal knowledge, and will endeavour to sketch them, as far as may be, in their natural colours.

## II.

A NAME that is often quoted in London papers is that of M. John Lemoigne, who writes for the *Journal des Débats*. There are plenty of English essayists as clever as M. Lemoigne, whose names are not known to the public, and never will be ; but to see a Frenchman write sound sense without rhapsody appears so strange a thing on this side of the Channel that whenever M. Lemoigne puts his hand to a long leader we hear of it from Lerwick to Land's End. Perhaps it ought to gratify us that M. Lemoigne was brought up in England, owed his first successes to a thorough knowledge of English literature, and speaks our language with a musical purity not often found even amongst us natives. He is now fifty-eight, and is a thoughtful, undemonstrative man, who wears a white neck-cloth, and has passed his manhood in wondering why France should not adapt herself to British institutions. About two years ago he let himself be converted to Republicanism, much as a man is converted to swallowing a black-draught ; but he readily seized on the Fusion as a pretext for changing sides again, and on the evening when the Count de Chambord's letter of renunciation was made public there was not an unhappier face in Paris than M. Lemoigne's. In his solemn way, M. Lemoigne has two bugbears : 1st, the British newspaper which writes up M. Gambetta in one column and sneers down

Sir Charles Dilke in the next; and 2nd, the British politician of the Palmerston school, who asserts that Frenchmen are not fit for liberty, and can only be managed by a government like the Second Empire. Full two-thirds of the leaders M. Lemoigne has ever penned are protests against the latter proposition; and during the Empire M. Lemoigne was backed up by a most distinguished phalanx of Anglophilists such as MM. St. Marc Girardin, Eugène Forcade, Prévost Paradol, and Edouard Hervé, the last of whom alone survives. Of these gentlemen it may truly be said that they knew the British Constitution as well as if it were an invention of their own. When Mr. Bright thundered against this or that "superannuated contrivance," when Mr. Beales's good friends pulled up the Park railings, when Mr. Stuart-Mill lent his countenance to woman suffrage or crotchety agrarian schemes, and when Mr. Disraeli dished the Whigs in the ingenious fashion we remember, M. Lemoigne and his co-thinkers all uttered piercing cries as if they were being personally molested. For all that, they made few proselytes outside the ranks of educated Frenchmen. Parisians approved their articles because the *Débats* and other papers in which their effusions were published were much disliked by the Emperor; and being disagreeable to the reigning potentate has always been a powerful element in French politics. But average Parisians were sceptical as to the panaceal properties of the British Constitution for distempers of the body politic; and after the fall of Napoleon III. the Anglophilists were carried onwards by the tide of events, or left high and dry miles behind it. M. Hervé, who is editor of the *Journal de Paris* and an amiable, scholarly writer, much terrified by the unwashed face of Democracy — M. Hervé still does battle for Westminster customs in his journal, which is the organ of the Orleans family; but M. Lemoigne can scarcely be said to have any opinion, except that everything and everybody are going wrong. A short while since, he declared ruefully that Reason had ceased to have a voice in public matters, and he is in just such a frame of mind as may cause us to hear any morning that he has retired from militant journalism. The readers of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* would not complain of this, for they might get a new series of literary essays like the *Life of Brummel*, *English Electoral Habits*, and *Caroline of Brunswick*, which

first drew public notice on M. Lemoigne some thirty years ago; but journalists at once learned, able, and temperate are everywhere so scarce that one must hope M. Lemoigne will be content to take the world as he finds it, nor be disgusted because he cannot lift it out of its wayward grooves. M. Lemoigne is not decorated, nor has he ever sought a post under Government, though he could long ago have had his pick of good places for the asking. The reason of this abstinence is that M. Lemoigne looks upon journalism as being itself a profession, the *bâton* in which is a character for independence and truth, which character M. Lemoigne has got. A prefectship would be no promotion, and indeed it might put him in grievous straits; for if M. Lemoigne were appointed prefect, he would not fail to commence ruling on British principles. With *Hallam* for his daily guide, *Blackstone* for his philosopher and friend, he would measure the length of his prerogatives by those of a Lord-Lieutenant; whereat the Ministry of the Interior, perceiving that he neither imprisoned anybody, nor suppressed newspapers, nor had recourse to the military to disperse meetings of orderly citizens assembled to discuss politics, would conclude that he had none of the qualifications necessary to a French official, and dismiss him with ignominy.

To speak of M. Louis Veuillot in the same breath with temperate journalism seems a strong measure, but the shock may be broken by coupling with M. Veuillot's name that of M. Ernest Rénan, M. Lemoigne's colleague on the *Débats*. Now, M. Rénan is the champion of free-thought, and M. Veuillot the beadle of Catholic orthodoxy; yet by a freak of fate these two gentlemen, who stand at the opposite poles of journalism, happen to be the two most skilful and pungent writers of their own language. The most courtly and classical among French writers is Count de Rémusat; the most academical in purism M. Guizot or M. Barthélémy St. Hilaire; the sweetest and softest, M. Octave Feuillet; and the most Parisian, M. Edmond About: but for extent of vocabulary, and for a complete mastery of all the resources of the French tongue, there are no two such penmen as MM. Rénan and Veuillot; and if only M. Rénan shared M. Veuillot's love for controversy, there might be some hot skirmishes now and then to keep the Boulevards lively. Unfortunately, M. Rénan writes seldom, and he

never gives heed to personal attacks. A man of fifty, with quiet, winning manners, a pleasing voice, and a handsome face, clean shaven as a priest's, no one would take him for the best abused man on the face of the globe—the author who, with his *Life of Jesus*, has sowed doubt broadcast, earned at M. Veuillot's hands the title of "wholesale peopler of madhouses and Antichrist," and been solemnly excommunicated by the Pope. Yet the strangest thing about M. Rénan is, that having been educated for holy orders, he has retained none of the casuistry of Romish seminaries. He refused ordination (and thereby renounced lucrative preferment, which had been promised him) because his master, M. Dupanloup, now Bishop of Orleans, was unable to solve some doubts that had beset him; and ever since he first put a pen to paper he has abided by two maxims: to make his own meaning clear, and never by a subterfuge to avoid facing the argument of an adversary. M. Rénan may be accepted as the incarnation of that French passion for logic which will take nothing for granted, but must have it all proved by rule of thumb. The consequence is, that instead of being a Republican, he is a theoretic Monarchist (without reference to particular dynasties), reflection having convinced him that Republicanism, however sound in doctrine, has invariably broken down (save in small States) in practice. This is a bitter pill for Republicans of the Louis Blanc type to swallow; but the great difference between M. Rénan's style of reasoning and theirs is that they will make no allowance for facts which do not tally with their preconceived notions and prejudices, whereas M. Rénan starts without any prejudice, and aims solely at discovering abstract truth. M. Louis Blanc, whom we have all of us met in London or Brighton at the period when he was English correspondent to the *Temps*, and who now divides his time between fidgety silence in the National Assembly, and occasional dogmatic contributions to the *Red Rapsel*—M. Louis Blanc, with his systematic one-sidedness, would make any fair-tempered man hate Republicanism, and he has made such men hate it by the thousand. A dainty *homunculus* (as Mr. Carlyle might call him), smaller in stature than even M. Thiers, with a wizen, hairless face, dapper hands, feminine voice, and a feline method in conversation, he has been surnamed the Jesuit of Republicanism, and is the originator of that

sound theory that Republicanism is a law of nature, and that nations have no right to set up kings, even if it suits them. Premising all his arguments with this hypothesis, he rejects lessons of history, experience, facts, knowledge, and all expedient policy in short, and is, in his own way, every whit as intolerant as the most fanatical of Legitimists. Indeed, if there be Legitimists so hot, it is because there are Republicans so fractious—pragmatical little men, who ride big hobbies over the likes and dislikes of mankind, and would have all humanity bow to an ideal picture of Democracy, as absurdly overcoloured as the daubs which are hung up outside shows to set clowns agape. M. Louis Blanc cannot understand that a man of M. Rénan's intellect should be so feeble as to look at two sides of a question; and M. Rénan is at a loss to conceive why a man should swear that the whole earth is red because his own spectacles happen to be scarlet. M. Louis Blanc will go to his final judgment with the ten volumes of his *Histoire de la Révolution* under his arm, and he will point to his panegyric of Robespierre with the satisfaction of one who has done his best to promote goodwill and confusion among men. M. Rénan will reach his death-bed unshaken in the belief that if MM. Robespierre and Louis Blanc had flourished together, one would have eaten up the other and left the world but little the better for being abandoned to the incisive experiments of the survivor.\*

But to return to M. Louis Veuillot, who hates MM. Rénan and Louis Blanc with equal piety. This modern Torquemada has not always been the ferocious Ultramontanist we behold him now. Like Augustine of Hippo he passed his early life among the profligates, contributing to comic news sheets, fighting duels with actors whom he had quizzed and brother journalists whom he had libelled, and publishing a novel, *L'Honnête Femme*, much less edifying in its tendency than the title might suggest. But having gone on a tour to Rome in 1838, when he was just five-and

\* The writer thinks it well to state that, in expressing his admiration for M. Ernest Rénan's impartiality and good faith as a logician, he offers no opinion on the *Life of Jesus*, which is not in question here. M. Rénan is not infallible; but those who heard his lectures when he was Professor of History at the Collège de France, and those who read the political and literary articles which he contributes from time to time to the *Débats* and *Revue des Deux Mondes*, must do him justice as a reasoner, however much they may differ from his views on Christianity.

twenty years old, the religious ceremonies of Easter week wrought such a powerful effect on him that he came back an altered man. Good-bye to songs and suppers, revelries and profane literature. M. Veuillot's friends laughed at the change that had come over him, and augured that it would wear off; but M. Veuillot growlingly anathematized them, and from that time to this he has been busy classing his fellow-men into two categories; namely, a very small one, who will troop into heaven behind him because they subscribe for his newspaper, *L'Univers*, or, at all events, adopt its tenets; and a painfully large one, who will be kept waiting at the gates without a chance of ever obtaining admittance. Priests of all shades, bishops, and even a few saints jostle one another in this last category, for M. Veuillot is no respecter of persons, and has long since learned that the cowl does not make the monk. Of his own zealous authority he has re-judged a round dozen of saints whom he asserts were canonized in a hurry or owing to erroneous information (which does not prevent him from championing Papal infallibility), and he rebukes tepid bishops and weak-kneed members of the lesser clergy without stint or scruple. A few years ago Monseigneur Dupanloup lost patience under M. Veuillot's admonitions, and gave vent to his feelings in a well-known letter, beginning, "*Monsieur, le rôle que vous cherchez à jouer dans l'Eglise est intolérable.*" But M. Veuillot did not care for that. The Pope approved him; and it was perhaps lucky for the Pope that he did approve, for M. Veuillot is much like that French lady who, being told that she ought to live in subjection to her husband because the Holy Spirit, speaking through the mouth of St. Paul had ordered it so, answered, "*Ah! mais moi je ne suis pas du même avis que le Saint Esprit.*" In person M. Veuillot bears some resemblance to the portraits of Mirabeau, his features being deeply pitted, his lips full and sarcastic, and his eyes ever a-glow. He is now sixty, but ripeness of age has in no way quenched his fiery spirit nor his indefatigable industry. He probably reads more than any other man in France, for, making it his duty to keep an eye over the orthodoxy of the whole Church, he dips into every new work of theology, and leaves not a pastoral or a *mandamus* unexamined. Talk to him in private about his travels, or about any secular matter not

tending to controversy, and you will be struck by his genial humour and his fanciful shrewdness in describing scenes and customs he has witnessed. He has also, though unmarried, a wonderful love for children; and if you catch him drawing out the yellow silk handkerchief, which he flourishes benevolently as a prelude to social intercourse, the chances are ten to one that the hearth-rug will be littered with sugar-plums which he has bought for baby acquaintances. But mention the name of a prominent free-thinker or Church waverer, and M. Veuillot's aspect undergoes a curious change. Back goes the yellow handkerchief into the capacious tail of his coat, his knotty right hand plunges straight into the bosom of his shirt, a sardonic grin (it is really not a smile) breaks over his expressive lips, and quick as malice itself M. Veuillot launches one of those pitiless bolts which quiver into the weakest part of a delinquent's armour. M. Veuillot is a terrible man for inventing epithets which sum up all the foibles of an enemy, and stick to him through a lifetime. He christened Prince Napoleon *Jérôme Egalité*, M. Thiers *King Ego*, Father Hyacinthe the *Sancho Panza of the Church*; and his printed sketches of divers anti-clerical people are like anatomical dissections, so cruelly do they expose the innermost blemishes of the victims. Freethinkers walk in much terror of M. Veuillot; and if they have any peccadilloes even on their private consciences, take care not to come athwart him; but perhaps Churchmen feel even more fearfully towards this Inquisitor of a man. It could scarcely have been pleasant for the bishops at the last Œcumenical to see M. Veuillot stalking about the Vatican as if he were the usher who had brought all these holy men together, and meant to punish such of them as were refractory; neither can it be agreeable to this juncture for foreign priests, who know little of M. Veuillot, to discover that he knows all about them, and is concerned to hear from private reports that their proceedings are not what — to his mind — they should be. Possibly, if the Romanist clergy throughout Christendom were privately polled, a strong majority would opine that M. Veuillot is a trifle too good for our earth, and that if he were withdrawn from this vale of tears, which he illumines with his blazing sanctity, it would be a providential release for him — and for them.



But M. Veuillot shows no anxiety to quit this scene of his ecclesiastical wrestles; and so long as he continues to splash epithets at his opponents, for the cleaning of their souls, one of the writers most frequently bespattered by him will be, as heretofore, M. Edmond About, editor of the *XIXième Siècle*, and Paris correspondent of the *Athenæum*. If ever France should possess a truly paternal government, which will restrict every man to the work he can best do, that government will prohibit M. About from writing in newspapers at all, and send him back to fabricate us some more novels. M. About is a capital novelist. His *Trente et Quarante* is a very gem, and his *Mariages de Paris* tales to read and re-read; but he is a poor journalist—inconsistent, flighty, and, not to put too fine a point upon it, by no means free from personal bias in judging men and measures. So long as he confined himself to fiction it fared well with him, for he achieved reputation, wealth, and paved his way to a fine marriage; but one day he took it into his head that he was born for political destinies, and since then he has been running to seed at a precipitous rate. The late Emperor was primarily responsible for unhinging M. About's brain, having invited the witty author to Compiègne and pinned a red ribbon to his button-hole. Then he talked to him about the Roman question; and as it was part of Imperial policy at that period (1858) to be on ill terms with the Pope, M. About was asked whether he would go to Rome at Government expense, and write a book about it—the implication being that his book on Rome should bear a close resemblance to his amusing skit on Greece, *Le Grèce Contemporaine*. Of course M. About was delighted.

We all have our weaknesses, and M. About's weakness was, and is, to hear himself called "Le petit-fils de Voltaire." He much loved to be noted as a famous infidel, and it would have been sweet to him if the Pope would only have banned him in a special bull, to be posted on all church doors throughout Christendom. Thus congenially disposed he went to Rome, and wrote of it all the evil that could be decently crammed in 300 octavo pages, after which he returned, expecting his reward in the shape of a post under Government. But the Emperor's Papal policy had in the mean time veered, and M. About was told that he should have a diplomatic employment by-and-by, only that his Roman book having caused "a

great scandal," it was advisable to wait until the soreness of it had passed off. Prince Napoleon conveyed this message at one of those jovial Friday dinners at his Pompeian Villa of the Avenue Montaigne, where he gathered, at the private request of his cousin, all the eminent pagans whom the Emperor durst not invite too often to the Tuileries. The Prince told M. About to wait—and M. About waited. He waited, and wrote more novels, got married, and enlarged his fine estate at Saverne. He waited, and from the official columns of the *Moniteur* wrote furious anti-republican articles, which secured him promotion in the Legion of Honour. But the diplomatic appointment kept tarrying, and at length the "Grandson of Voltaire" lost patience, and following the immemorial wont of baffled Frenchmen, discovered that he had been from the first an ardent Liberal. This was about five years ago, and M. About lost no time in revealing his long-concealed Liberalism in the *Gaulois*, then a new paper started in rivalry to the *Figaro*. From the *Gaulois* he passed to the *Soir* as editor, with a salary of 60,000 fr., and at the outbreak of the war appointed himself special correspondent, and wrote from the battlefields a series of letters most remarkable for everything except gratitude to the Sovereign who had so often and so kindly befriended him. Gratitude, however, has never been M. About's forte, and he would gladly subscribe to the late Nestor Roqueplan's aphorism: "*L'ingratitude est l'indépendance du cœur*," adding thereto this maxim of his own: "*Les bienfaits coûteraient trop cher s'il fallait les payer*." The late critic Sainte-Beuve, who knew M. About well, said of him, "*Chacun de ses livres est une belle œuvre et une mauvaise action*," meaning that the author of *Le Roi des Montagnes* could seldom resist the temptation of saying a witty thing at the expense of people whom he intimately knew, whence that vein of demure personalities which runs through all his novels—personalities which the generality of readers cannot detect, but which are apparent enough to the initiated, who read between the lines. Without going so far as M. Sainte-Beuve, one may say of M. About that he is one of those delightfully keen psychologists whom it is pleasanter to have as a neutral acquaintance than as a foe. He is now forty-five, but looks ten years younger; and you have only to glance at his wide-awake face, rendered

deceptively bluff by a hay-coloured beard, his malicious blue eyes and meaning smile, to guess how agreeably this thorough Parisian can pull absent celebrities to pieces over a quiet dinner-table, or in a snug drawing-room before an admiring audience of ladies. M. About is a great favourite with ladies, but as regards men friends he stands in much the same position as Prince Talleyrand, who remarked that he had all his life through possessed one sincere friend — and that was himself. However, M. About can boast of at least a fervent comrade and worshipper in the person of M. Francisque Sarcey, the dramatic critic to the *Temps*, and M. About's chief contributor to the *XIXième Siècle*. As Boswell was to Johnson, so is M. Sarcey to M. About; but we know that Johnson did not consider himself bound to repay Boswell's admiration by a warm show of kindred feeling. With respect to political opinions, M. About is still hoping, so his enemies say, for a diplomatic appointment; and meanwhile he advocates a sort of chameleonic republicanism, which varies much in hue, according to the colour of the party that may happen to be in the ascendant. His latest public achievement has been to fight a duel with M. Edouard Hervé, and to pay a fine of 8*l.* for this misdemeanour, which arose from an interview with the Count of Paris. Two years ago, when it looked as though the Count were going to become King, M. About requested M. Hervé to present him to his Royal Highness, and M. Hervé having complied, M. About said, with an amiable bow, to the Prince, "All the hopes of France are centred on you, Monseigneur." This year the hopes of France having centred elsewhere, M. About found it convenient to ignore his compliment and to abuse the Prince, whereat M. Hervé waxed wroth, and some bitter articles ensued, culminating in the fine of 8*l.* above-mentioned. However, all who know M. About do him the justice to feel sure that, should the Count of Paris become King after all, this little unpleasantness will be forgotten, for Louis Philippe d'Orléans is not vindictive, and M. About is ever generous in forgiving and forgetting the hard things he has said of others.

Another journalist who has long hankered after a public post — but nothing less than a seat in the Cabinet would suit him — is M. Emile de Girardin, the founder of the *Presse*, and owner of the *Liberté* — "le Grand Emile" as Boulevard wags call him. M. de Girardin wears a long

wisp of hair over his forehead like the great Napoleon, and just as the dancer Trenis said a hundred years ago, "This century has begotten three men — Voltaire, Frederick the Great, and me" — so would M. de Girardin willingly say, or at all events think, "Two men have illustrated this century — I and Napoleon." He is now past seventy, and has glanced at events all his life through that sheen eye-glass of his, which was once a very will-o'-the-wisp, leading Frenchmen forever into new fields of speculation, financial quagmires, and political morasses. At an age when most boys are at school, M. de Girardin had written a novel; before he had even shaved he started a joint-stock company; at twenty-five he founded a paper, which candidly called itself *Le Voleur*, because it filched the best articles from all the other journals; and at twenty-five-and-a-half this paper had procured him three suits-at-law, a criminal action for libel, and two duels. But M. de Girardin won his suits, got acquitted for the libel, and winged his adversaries: after which he started afresh, and inaugurated a promising era in journalism by publishing serial fictions in a daily paper along with political leaders, and selling the mixture for a halfpenny cheaper than rival newspapers. This grand idea of the *roman feuilleton* put the completing touch to M. de Girardin's fame. All the other papers, even the grave *Débats* (which trebled its circulation by M. Eugène Sue's novel, *Les Mystères de Paris*) felt bound to season their politics with long-winded romances; and the *Presse*, in which this experiment had been first tried, brought its owner a cool 10,000*l.* a-year. M. de Girardin's next exploits consisted in marrying the beautiful and witty Mdle. Delphine Gay (then known in literature as the "Viscount de Launay"); in shooting and killing Armand Carrel, the chief of Republican journalists (1836); in accurately predicting the fall of every Cabinet that declined listening to his advice, and in getting talked of as a possible member of all new Cabinets. After such a well-spent career M. de Girardin might fairly claim to sit at rest in the sumptuous palace he has bought in the Champs Elysées next to ex-Queen Isabella of Spain; but M. de Girardin is one of those men whom nothing in this life will wholly silence, and he takes as great a pleasure as ever he did in bestowing advice on statesmen who have not asked him for it. He has been called *Le Saint Sacrement*, because it has



been remarked that Governments only send for him when their condition is past praying for; and his arrival invariably acts like a *Nunc Dimittis* which closes their career for good and all. He hurried to the Tuileries on the 23rd February, 1848, just in time to counsel Louis-Philippe's abdication when it was too late. He was consulted by Napoleon III. in 1870, by the Empress Regent after Sedan, and by M. Thiers on the eve of the 24th May; but he has never been able to persuade either Sovereign or Premier that he would be a valuable person to have in an administration. This has imparted to his conversation a somewhat injured tone, and he insensibly speaks of himself as of a man whose worth contemporaries have ignored. He has certainly made more noise in his time than any dozen other journalists clubbed together; and what is still better, he has made varieties of noises, for there is not a single opinion in the catalogue of political creeds which he has not at one time or other advocated. In this respect he may be said to have set an example of suppleness to this and the coming generation of writers, who make, and will make it, a point of honour to quote him as a precedent whenever they wish to assail to-day what they defended yesterday — and *vice versa*. But he has set as good an example in other points, for he was the first to launch that style of spasmodic leader, chopped into trenchant lines and short paragraphs, a style now become classical. No great trouble is needed for such leaders, and M. de Girardin, who has never deigned to read up the annals of any nation but the French, had a great art for jumbling up scraps of historical lore, picked up in desultory reading. In 1848, when he threw himself, heart, soul, paper, and pen, into the advocacy of Louis Napoleon's Presidential candidature, this was the sort of leader to which he would treat the readers of the *Presse* every evening. There were generally three or four of these leaders, all bearing his signature; and it must be borne in mind that each of the sentences, here divided by dashes, occupied a separate line of large print, well leaded.

#### L'Empire c'est la Paix.

*Empire is peace — Peace is Empire — Without Empire no Peace — Without peace no Empire — Why is Empire peace? — Because it is propped up by bayonets — Why are bayonets peaceful? — Because*

*they frighten the Foreigner — To each nation its Providential man — To England a Pitt, to France a Napoleon — Why was Pitt strong? — Because he ruled free England — Why was England free? — Because she was ruled by Pitt — There was a King called Nebuchadnezzar — A King of Babylon and Nineveh — Why may the French nation be some day compared to Nebuchadnezzar? — Because this King of Babylon, being a fool, was sent to herd for seven years with the beasts of the field — Will France ever herd with the beasts of the field? — Yes, and chew the cud of remorse and humiliation — When and why? — France will herd for seven times seven years with the brute nations of the world — And be despised — And laughed at — And mocked — And it will serve her right — If she do not elect Louis Napoleon.*

This style of composition might occasion surprise if found in a leading column of the *Times*, but to a Parisian public it tasted well, with a glass of bitter drink just before dinner. To this day Frenchmen allude, with a national pride, to the Great Emile's journalistic feats, and point to his numberless successful disciples in the Press as a proof that his name can never be obliterated. And yet it is probable that M. de Girardin will be remembered less in connection with his fine manner of writing than because of the good-humoured patronage he has always extended to young and struggling men of letters. Himself an adventurer — the term is no disgrace to him, for he wrote an autobiography, greatly glorying in the title — he has never missed a chance of fostering youthful talent. His principal contributors have always been young men, for he loved to have such about him; and any one, no matter how shabby, eccentric, and friendless, who came to ask him for employment, was sure of obtaining it, if he passed satisfactorily through an ordeal to which M. de Girardin would subject him to test his sharpness. One of the Great Emile's favourite tests consisted in saying to the aspirant: "Call on me to-morrow at six." If the aspirant came at six P.M., he was a lost man; but if he had the sense to guess that so Olympian a personage as this editor must be afoot and busy with the early bird, the Great Emile's thin lips smiled approvingly, and he would say: "That's right, you'll stop and breakfast."

## III.

It has just been mentioned that M. Girardin has had many disciples: they have, in fact, been so numerous that Parisian journalists who have not at some time or other served under the Great Emile's orders are almost exceptions. M. de Girardin's practice was to keep a writer till he had achieved a name, then the two generally quarrelled; for the Great Emile was renowned for having a new idea every day, and when his contributors become too consequential to jump obediently from notion to notion every twenty-four hours, he would hint that the world was large enough for two, and bow his unbending disciple out. Let us, however, take our seats in front of the Café de Suède, next door to the Variétés Theatre, and see M. de Girardin's old pupils, and indeed all other Parisian journalists of note, file by towards five P.M., the "absinthe hour;" with thirsty but cheerful looks, just fresh from the printing and publishing offices, that cluster about the Rue Montmartre. The Café de Suède is the head-quarters of journalists athirst, and a score or two of them are sure to drop in to discuss the news in the first editions of evening papers which appear between four and five. All these educators of the people are not equally eminent, nor do they call for full biographies at our hands. But many of them are powers in their way, and deserve at least a nominal mention.

First a young man of thirty-two, with unfortunate looking shoes which show his socks, and unbraced pantaloons which exhibit a bulging expanse of linen below his waistcoat. The nap of his hat bristles up, he has a pile of papers under his arm, his hands are thrust deep in his waistband, and he walks as if the cares of State still sat on his shoulders. This is M. Clement Duvernois, editor of the *Ordre*, the Empress Eugénie's paper. He was at once a Radical, and a gushing pupil of M. de Girardin's at a period when the latter was at quills drawn with the Empire; but one day he changed opinions somewhat unexpectedly, was met going in and out of the Tuileries with notes for the Emperor's *Life of Caesar*, and eventually blossomed out as Minister of Commerce—a post he held for three weeks, that is from the 10th August to 4th September, 1870. M. Duvernois wears a ferocious-looking beard, and he does not forgive the Republican party for having nipped his career as a states-

man untimely in the bud. If the Empire were restored, he would hope to be some day prime-minister, and would wage war upon M. Rouher, whom he secretly regards as a hindrance in his way; for if M. Rouher were gathered to his fathers, and if M. Duvernois could obtain a seat in the Assembly as easily as he did in the Imperial Corps Législatif, then he would assuredly lead the Bonapartist faction and be reckoned a somebody. Meantime he writes well and violently, earns a fine income, and would probably buy a pair of braces and brush his hat if he could divert his thoughts from the public weal.

Behind him comes another writer, careless in his attire, and with him one of the best-dressed men in Paris: these two are M. J. J. Weiss and M. Henri de Pène, editor of *Paris Journal*. M. Weiss is like one of those rough-bound books which one must not judge from the cover. He disdains gloves, but he writes as few other men can; and, what is better, he is a singular instance of chivalrous political fidelity, "pushed almost to Quixotism." Originally editor of the *Journal de Paris*, M. Weiss assailed the Empire in vigorous but always temperate language, and claimed for France a Parliamentary Government and liberties. When the Emperor called M. Ollivier to power, and seemed thereby to be entering upon a Liberal policy, M. Weiss felt it would be uncandid to continue his opposition; and so he accepted a post in the Fine Arts department, and has been secretly fretting over his mistake ever since. If he were as many other men, M. Weiss would easily have shaken off his yoke of allegiance after the 4th September, and have set to work abusing the *régime* he had served; but he is not like other men. Having drawn Imperial pay, he will not stoop to write against Imperialism, though at heart he never loved that form of rule, and possibly loves it now less than ever. His terse and scholarly articles in *Paris Journal* are much read, but there is a disenchanted tone about them, and when M. Weiss talks to you he does so with those frequent shrugs which mark a Frenchman's belief in the utter vanity of things human. M. Weiss's editor, however, still thinks there are cakes and ale to live for. He twists a gold-headed cane in his well-gloved hands, fillips a speck of dust off the silk facings of his coat, and tells you, with an aristocratical smile, that he would like to flick all Republicanism into space as

easily. A thorough exquisite is M. de Pène; cool, handsome, and brave as a Zouave. He burst into renown by very nearly being slain in a duel, under circumstances rather comical. Being then a contributor to the *Figaro*, he wrote of the officers of a certain line regiment, that they rushed into the supper-room at the Tuileries balls as if they were a troop of jackals. Justly incensed, the officers drew lots among them as to which should challenge M. de Pène, and made a vow that they would fight him, one after another, until his insolent blood were spilled to the last drop. But they were spared this trouble, for the first officer thrust home so cruelly that for six weeks M. de Pène's life was despaired of, and the Colonel of the —th Regiment declared that the honour of "his jackals" was satisfied. As the Army was not popular at this date, it needed no more than this duel to make M. de Pène a hero, and to double the worth of his literary signature. He soon found a moneyed man to risk starting a paper in his company, and there he is now, a living instance of the fact that a hole in the chest is not always an unmixed evil.

But duellists will always be liked in France, for look at this young giant who comes striding along with his curly head aloft and his creole features, snarling at a pair of Radical journalists who flit by him. This is M. Paul de Cassagnac, who has fought about a dozen duels, and will be engaged in many more such encounters before he has done. He is editor of the *Pays*, and has been so for the last three years, though he is but little past his thirtieth year, and knows not much of literature. To write in the *Pays* you must have a good command of virulent adjectives, and must be an adept with swords or pistols. You must, further, worship Napoleon III., believe that the Second Empire heaped innumerable blessings upon France, and be well versed in all scandals appertaining to the private lives of foremost Republicans. M. de Cassagnac plies his pen as if it were a bludgeon, and when not engaged in writing articles of three columns' length—for his style is not concise—he may be generally found fencing in M. Paz's gymnastic rooms, and there is no denying that he fences well. A congenial friend of his is M. Edmond Tarbé, who edits the *Gaulois*, and tries to model his clothing and manners on those of M. de Pène without quite succeeding. M. Tarbé earned some distinction by riding out of

besieged Paris disguised as a postilion, and going straight off to Brussels whilst his countrymen were getting their heads broken. At Brussels he started a provincial edition of his *Gaulois*, and, to the astonishment of the public, began to champion the claims of the dethroned Emperor, whom until that time he had always assailed. There was a mysteriousness in this proceeding which has never been cleared up; but it is enough for ordinary inquirers that the *Gaulois* has been since the war one of the most obedient and most frequently "inspired" organs of Chislehurst. It is also soothing to know that M. Tarbé has amassed a fortune of several million francs by his paper, and finds no difficulty in spending his money, being young and fond of hospitality.

But we must pass lightly over the next covey of journalists who come scudding down the Boulevard in a brotherly throng. M. Louis Jourdan, the tall, grey-headed, and austere editor of the democratic *Siècle*; M. Anatole de la Forge, a short-bearded and waddling iconoclast in spectacles, one of the chief contributors to the same paper; M. Hippolyte Castille, whose articles, signed with the pseudonym of "Alceste," have caused the suppression of no less than three daily papers, and who, for all his vigour, looks a quiet old gentleman enough; and M. Edouard Portalis, a young dandy, who is a son, nephew, cousin, and brother of staunch Conservative landowners, and who himself dabbles with the tips of his yellow gloves into the frothings of extreme democracy, and lately tried to form a new alliance between Red Republicans and Red Bonapartists under Prince Napoleon. Then we have M. Francisque Sarcey, friend, as above said, to M. About—a fat, pleasant critic, who would look well disguised as a monk of old, and who contrives to say, in nine out of every ten articles he writes, "at the time when I was a schoolmaster"—the fact being that he once held a professorship in a Government college, and was dismissed therefrom for telling his pupils that Augustus was a poor sort of character, and Brutus a much better citizen than Cæsar. Next to M. Sarcey we may meet M. Charles Monselet, dramatic critic to *Événement*, and very busy at this juncture trying to set up a new joint-stock theatre at the Porte-Montmartre. He, too, is plump, and wears spectacles, and the chances are that he will have on his arm a very popular young writer with crisp hair and

a mahogany face—M. Victor Cochinat, of the *Rappel*, who hails from Guadeloupe. But M. Monselet is one of the princes of the French press, and his walks down the Boulevards are generally a triumphant series of hat-liftings and hand-shakings till he comes finally to anchor in a snug corner of the Café de Suède cheek-by-jowl with a gentleman resplendent in a velvet waistcoat, a red tie, and too much watch-chain. Who that has ever been in Paris will not recognize, at the mere sight of this exuberant jewellery, M. Léo Lespès, known to, and beloved by, every *concierge*, market women, and laundress in Paris as “Timothée Trimm”? M. Trimm served his seven years in the army, and never rose above sergeantship; neither did his career dawn very brightly after he recurred to civilian life, for he had no friends, no money, no profession, and as he pathetically said, “no clear ideas as to anything in general.” All this, however, was baggage enough for a literary man; and one day M. Lespès, meeting the Israelite capitalist M. Millaud, suggested to him the creation of a one-sou daily paper. M. Millaud thought the idea good, and, as his custom was, acted on it without delay. The *Petit Journal* was started, and in less than a twelvemonth rose to a circulation of 150,000, and by the end of two years’ time to 250,000. For five consecutive years, without a single day’s interruption, M. Léo Lespès contributed to this sheet a daily *chronique* of three columns’ length; and when at last he retired from the *Petit Journal* to the *Petit Moniteur*, it was only to continue this extraordinary kind of labour at an increased salary. The *Petit Journal* had given him 2,000*l.* a year, the *Petit Moniteur* offered him 3,000*l.*, and Timothée Trimm draws this salary to the present day, and does his best to deserve it by instructive *chroniques*, compiled largely out of biographical dictionaries, memoirs, and books of travel, and yet very readable. M. Léo Lespès considers that he has done much to educate the masses, and perhaps he has; at all events, it must be recorded to his honour that he is a singularly impartial writer, and that he appears to be utterly unconscious of the political changes that go on around him. He never alludes to them even remotely; and no man knows what his political opinions are. If you question him on this subject, he answers, with a wink, “I believe in Paris, and nothing else; and to tell the truth, I have not travelled

farther than ten miles outside Paris for the last twelve years.” Then he lights a cigarette, and strokes one of the most over-waxed pair of moustaches human eye ever beheld.

But Parisian journalists are so numerous, and space is so limited, that a whole bevy of well-known faces must be left unsketched, though they come crowding up, and seem to protest, French-like, against being left unnoticed. One at least of the number must be alluded to, for he is the most conspicuous of all—namely, M. Hippolyte de Villemessant, proprietor and editor of the *Figaro*. Short and round, with a very French head of bullet shape, a drooping, dyed moustache, and an irrepressible white waistcoat, M. de Villemessant holds veritable levees in every public spot where his countrymen congregate. He has a way of nodding and of holding out his hand, which seems to say that he knows his great importance, and would like to keep up the dignity of it if he could; but unfortunately he cannot. When he first started his *Figaro* he never counted on its becoming an important political oracle, selling 50,000 copies a day, and guiding the opinions of all the lighter classes of the French capital. Now that he finds himself a courted personage, to whom even Deputies and Cabinet Ministers think it prudent to bow, he is rather struck by the humour of the thing, and will confess the fact in private if he thinks you can be relied on. It is needless to say that M. de Villemessant’s high-sounding name is an assumed one, his real patronymic being Cartier; also that, like the generality of French literary folk, he began in life with no capital but his own wits. His mode of rising was, however, extremely simple once he had scraped enough credit and money together to found a paper. Unlike other editors who have an opinion and lay it down as a guide to their contributors, M. de Villemessant kept his opinions to himself, and allowed the writers on his staff to say what they pleased. As he enlisted the most pushing, witty, and reckless journalists that love or money could procure, the concert of discordant sounds which his newspaper emitted was something altogether new in journalism, and like most new things, it paid well. Another principle of M. de Villemessant’s has always been to dish up the commonest scraps of news in the most attractive form—strict adherence to facts being a secondary consideration—and the re-

sult is, that when a mad dog is killed in the *Figaro's* columns, he always dies more artistically and under more interesting circumstances than in prints of the old school. This way of doing business M. de Villemessant calls "true journalism," and he does not conceal his contempt for news-sheets which, like those of England, describe things "dryly and barely," as they have happened.

From Good Cheer.

## ROBERT HOLT'S ILLUSION.

## V.

THE days that followed were for Robert Holt somewhat strange days—days wherein he refused to look backward or forward, to see the things that had been, or the things that might have been. This could hardly be because of full content with the present—his passionate, frequent letters to Fanny Claydon breathed nothing of contentment. They were the outcome of a soul fevered, unexamined, reckless.

To Fanny Claydon herself these letters were a puzzle. The fierce, impetuous mode of expression, the uncontrollable impatience of separation, the sudden, fervid yearnings, the strange, rare touches of tenderness, were all incomprehensible to her. But they were not unwelcome. The letters were looked for with eagerness, received with delight, and answered in a pretty, childish, rambling fashion that amused Robert Holt as much as it disappointed him. He would be glad when the necessity for letter-writing was over, he told himself; and it should be over soon if he could have his way in the matter.

And how was it in the thatched cottage that stood in the rift of the moorland? An aged woman dying, a younger woman with a dead heart—poverty, loneliness, plain-sewing, silence.

Once the silence had been broken; there had been a burst of wild, mad longing, a sense of wrong and injury, keen, intolerable. Then forgiveness again, and a very agony of love, a very agony of blind craving for the veriest morsel of food, for the scantiest crumb of affection. She would write to him, go to him, creep to his feet and die there, abjectly, contemptibly. Then came a thought of that other woman, that woman that was so young and so fair and so winsome; a woman that had had a life and a world of

her own before her, and yet had come to darken another world, to take all there had ever been of sunshine out of another life. This was a moment of terrible strife for Hester. It was so hard to think charitably of one who had done a deed like this; but it was by strife in little things that Hester had come to be great; and it was after all but a little thing to forgive an injury that had been, in a certain sense, unintentional. A victory was won here, but there was no consciousness of anything won. It did but seem natural to Hester that she should come to think kindly of one of whom *he* thought with so much more than kindness.

After this struggle, the old weight of calmness came down again, a calmness that had no virtue in it, as Hester knew. But it seemed to her that she was powerless to contend against it. There was a great blankness over all things, a stoniness in the heart of things; she felt as one who in a living body bears about a dead soul. If she prayed, it was as one praying by strange altars. There was none to hear, none to see.

Love by harsh evidence  
Thrown from its eminence,  
Even God's Providence  
Seemed estranged.

But a new hour was at hand. In the silence of the night a sound was heard, the unfolding of the wings of Azrael,—the last faint sigh of a soul going home to God.

Alone with the dead!—with one who has finished that last dread act of dying!—an act the very thought of which is sufficient to hold men all their lifetime subject to bondage! In what a strange new light the world of the living appears to us now! Our own life, what is it? "As a dream when one awaketh," the Psalmist says; and of the thousand and one things to which life has been likened, none may compare with this, there is none so full of pathos, none so true. But the words are seldom realized till we kneel alone by the body of one who has but just awakened from his dream. Kneeling thus, we, in a partial way, awake also. The appalling unreality of the things that are seen startles us; the truth, the nearness of the things that are not seen, overpowers us. Life is no more a long, weary *via dolorosa*, but a too-brief hour of watching. The terrible struggle to reconcile life in the world with death to the world, seems a struggle no longer. The former things are passed away.



There is a light not of this world upon the narrow, thorn-strewn pathway that lies before us; there are strange shadows upon the flowery fields on either hand. The faces, too, that surround us are changed. Men and women that had for us no form nor comeliness, nor any beauty that we should desire them, become radiant with beauty, new, sublime, unearthly: from other faces,—faces that had been a joy to us—we turn with a prayer. The old hopes and feelings change also, yielding place to new. If one man's tenderness, one woman's smile, has been to us a religion, how we shudder thinking of such religion now! If any human being has done us a wrong, how wan and feeble the memory of the dead is kneeling here! how intense and searching the memory of the deeds we have done ourself! There may have been no act for man to point out with finger of scorn, but the hand of the Recording Angel has moved against us, and conscience endorses his record with terrible readiness now. There is no more thought of the things endured, nor of any endurance to be exercised in the future. If by any means we may escape,—that is the only thought. If by any means we may so live that the midnight cry shall find us also ready. If by any means we may attain to the Resurrection of the Just.

In this hour, then, it was that the dead weight of a prayerless sorrow passed from Hester Shepherd's heart. Not that it ceased to be a sorrow at all, that could hardly be; but the darkness of it was no more a darkness that could be felt, no more a cause of strangeness between her soul and God.

Then came days of silent watching. Now and then a solitary neighbour came over the moor, passed noiselessly through the darkened rooms, whispered a word of sympathy, and went out into the autumn sunshine again. And after these days came a day more drear still. Hagar Shepherd was laid to rest in the quiet moorland churchyard, where generations of her forefathers slept. The neighbours went back to the cottage, where Ellen Jefferson—Hester's Aunt Ellen—made strong green tea, and dispensed large slices of a species of plum-cake. Hester sat alone in her mother's room, but she could not shut out the gossip, the laudation of the dead, the memories of the past, the speculations as to the future. Her own future. "Poor Hester! what was she going to do?" they asked; but

Ellen Jefferson could not tell. She shook her head ominously, and her voice sank to a whisper, but she had nothing to tell.

Presently the neighbours went home. Hester stood amongst them for a moment at the last, her presence causing a sudden hush of silence. "Good-bye," she said, "and thank you all." She smiled, but such a sad wan smile it was, that some there were touched to tears. And her voice, too, was changed. It had strange fixed tones in it, as if nothing could ever put life and ease into it again; and her face was, in every line of it, the face of a woman stricken with a life-long sorrow. Yet she looked very beautiful, very sweet. The golden hair drooped a little, the black dress hung in heavy folds, the soft grey eyes told a sad tale.

Then came a night of sleeplessness, and pain, and desolation. The water rushed over the rock by the side of the little cottage; the wind swept in plaintive gusts among the foliage; the old clock struck the hour slowly; through the tiny panes the daylight crept. Then life began again; the sorrow that had never slept through the night, that had been so sharp and stimulating, turned to a dull ache now. It was not easier to bear; and Hester's power of endurance was growing less than it had been. She was worn in mind and in body, inwardly fevered with the strife that she was for the moment ignoring. And there was a sense of insufficiency to contend with, too—a consciousness of failure of purpose, of faithlessness, of want of insight.

At last, towards evening, came a moment that Hester had been dreading all day. It had been a restless day. She had wandered in and out of the cottage, up and down the gill, backward and forward over the moor; trying to peer into the grey future, trying to be content with the greyness; then trying to reach out higher, to grasp some fragment of truth that should save her from drowning in this strong surge that was beating upon her soul.

But the day was nearly over. "Ya mun come an' sit doon a bit noo," Mrs. Jefferson said a little sharply, placing a round, fat, red hand on either knee. She was a woman who prided herself somewhat upon her business qualities—firmness, decision especially. Over at Kirkthwaite she kept a greengrocer's shop, and took lodgers, and did a little starching and ironing. She was a clean, tidy woman, with a broad red face, a tiny upturned nose, and a fondness for bright



colours. At the present moment, over her black dress, she wore a red and yellow bandanna.

"Ya'll ha' to know, Ah reckon," the little woman said; and then followed the long and oft-told story of her own struggles and successes. Hester listened very patiently, very attentively; and the attention was pleasing to Mrs. Jefferson. The tone of her voice grew softer, and her plans for Hester's future were disclosed with a persuasiveness of argument that Hester had not expected.

The said plans were very simple, very feasible. It was of course impossible that Hester should remain at the mill; she had few relations, few friends, and, as Mrs. Jefferson reminded her, still fewer talents. The one available talent that she had could not be turned to account everywhere. Mrs. Jefferson had been told that all the work was done by sewing-machines in large towns nowadays; but she knew of plenty of work that might be had for the asking in the town of Kirkthwaite. If Hester would go there, she could have board and lodging much cheaper than she could have them elsewhere. And there were other advantages. But the greatest advantage of all was not pointed out by Ellen Jefferson. She knew of no reason why Hester would be especially glad to leave the neighbourhood of Northscaur; knew nothing of memories that would cling forever to Stonebeck Mill.

Mrs. Jefferson's offers were accepted with a readiness that surprised her a little.

"You'll remember you're free to do as you like," she said, with a change of tone and attitude. And Hester did remember, with a pain that left her strengthless for the moment. Then she recovered herself.

"I think I should like to do what you wish, Aunt Ellen," she said. "I know you do wish it, and you're very kind." And Ellen Jefferson was touched by Hester's quiet gratitude, and in her own heart honestly glad and relieved.

Then some minor matters, such as the sale of the furniture, were settled; and after that Mrs. Jefferson went to say "good-bye" to a friend who lived a mile or so above Stonebeck Mill. When she had gone, Hester sat as she had sat on that night when the first shadow fell between her and Robert Holt — silent, moveless, barely conscious.

Then, slowly, consciousness came back, bringing dark blind thoughts that were

full of perplexity. Not coherent thoughts. Some seemed born of the outer events, some of whispering voices. It seemed to Hester that they all needed explanation; that life itself was beginning to need a key. Then she travelled backward over her life, over the years of hunger and negation; then over the brief time of partial friction — brief, but full of compensation. Had she accepted it too readily, dwelt in it too completely? Where had been her sin? Was renunciation the one duty of life? Was there no happiness for man nor woman save in utter rejection — in utter refusal to accept the least of the things of the world? Could freedom from disappointment be secured in no other way save this?

Then thought paused a little; there was no apprehension of anything save blankness, isolation, and a haze of trial yet to come.

A hush had fallen upon the bowed spirit, and slowly thought passed into an attitude of voiceless supplication. There was no plea to be satisfied, uplifted. Hester did but pray as the Syro-Phœnician woman prayed, that some crumbs might fall from the Master's table.

"Have mercy on me, O Lord!" This was the woman's plea.

"But He answered her not a word."

Is He not now oftentimes as silent as then by the coasts of Tyre and Sidon?

Does it not often happen, too, that His first answer is of the nature of denial?

"Hold thee still in the Lord; wait patiently for Him, and He shall bring it to pass."

"For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee."

"He said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful."

True and faithful in life and in death if poor, blind, struggling humanity would but believe and see. Is man against us? Yet is God for us. Is isolation our cross, want of sympathy, tenderness, appreciation? It is no true cross. His tender mercy is over all, pitying, listening, waiting for our first utterance of perfect trust, for the very first proof that we have learnt to lie still.

There is no harder task in life than this of learning to lie still. Not to lie idly, not carelessly, not "untimely seeking here the peace of heaven;" but with calm, trustful, unswerving acquiescence.

For acquiescence such as this, Hester's

voiceless prayer went up. "But He answered not a word."

Still she sat there silently; still under the brooding wing of the Angel of Peace. What right had she, had any human being, to expect freedom from sorrow and disappointment? Still less, what right to expect happiness, to claim it as a due? Was the attainment of earthly happiness a noble aim? Would not the Christian who should set himself to attain it be following his Master in ways He never trod?

And the things that had been — by whom had they been permitted, ordered? Who had meted out the joys and the sorrows of each day and year? Who had put an end to the joys, and mixed the cup of sorrow that she was drinking now? And how had she accepted the cup? Had there been any readiness, any willingness in her manner of taking it from the Unseen Hand?

Then slowly, almost imperceptibly, the Master's answer came. It was an answer of peace. There seemed to be no more difficulty, no more perplexity. There had been storm and darkness; now came light and quietness. One walking upon the waters of strife. A Voice saying softly, "It is I."

Here, then, for Hester Shepherd, was the unfolding of the great secret of life, the grand master-key to all philosophies. A thrill swept over her, she listened breathlessly; and through the gloom the kindly Voice came, "It is I."

And through all the days that followed — the last days in the old home, the first days in the new; days of parting and anxiety, of solitude, and dissonance, and pain — through and above all came the still small Voice, "It is I."

When Robert Holt heard of Hester's new trial, his heart was troubled within him. He had an unreasonable longing to go to her, to be of use to her. He had never ceased to think of her. It had been beyond his power to put her away out of his mind altogether. But he had told himself that it was not love he felt for her now; that the old reverence had deepened to veneration. At first she had stood in his memory as she had stood by the grey rock when they parted, with the quiet exaltation on her face, the sweet self-forgetful smile, and eyes with the wondrous light in them. But time and other thoughts had intervened; she had come to him of late enshrined in a

shadowy, half-spiritual haze, her golden hair gleaming like the halo of a pictured saint. He could have prayed to her as she stood thus before him, and he would have thought such prayer no sin. He had ceased altogether to think of her as an ordinary woman, who might be a man's wife, and help him to keep his books and write his business letters.

But the knowledge that fresh sorrow had come upon Hester seemed to turn the wheels of life backward a little, to invest her with the old loving and lovable humanity — to place him by her side as he had stood six months ago; to give him power to stand there when he would, to do for her what he thought best, to help and comfort her in the way he thought kindest and most tender. All that he might have done then she was needing now, and his one duty to her was to keep away from her, to hide himself from her sight forever. It was like an awakening from a dream. If he might only see her once, might only tell her . . . What was it he would tell her? What was the thing he put away out of his thoughts so hastily, with such a sudden bitterness? What new knowledge had come to him by this fresh activity of thought and emotion?

When he came to know that Hester had left Stonebeck Mill, that the old place was deserted altogether, sadness fell upon him, and a restless desire to go there once again. It was a grey November morning when he went. A heavy mist was rolling away over the moor, disclosing here and there a gloomy pine-tree, here and there a weather-beaten crag. Dew-drops hung heavily on whin and briar, the water came rushing over the fall with a dull, hoarse sound, the only sound that broke the silence. The cottage door was closed; the window-shutter was swaying slowly to and fro; the wind had blown the leafless rose-tree from the wall, and the broken branches were straggling across the pathway. Robert Holt hid his face with his hands, and so he stood awhile. Then he turned homeward, pale, sorrowing, and repentant. Over the moor the grey November sky lowered more heavily than before.

The postman was coming away from the old red-brick house as Robert Holt walked up the road, and his housekeeper had put the letters on the breakfast-table as usual — two cheques, an order for salt-fish, three circulars, a letter from Fanny Claydon, brief, angular, highly-scented.

"MY DEAREST R,—I don't know what you have thought of me not answering your letter before, but I have had such dreadful attacks of toothache; I couldn't eat and I couldn't sleep, and sometimes I didn't care to go anywhere or do anything at all. Yet *only think*, I have had to go to *four parties* within the last *six days*, so *imagine* how tired I am. I *did* enjoy them though; I think I could dance forever. Walter's house looks so nice now. They have got *dark green* curtains for the winter, with scarlet and gold Byzantine border, and table cover to match. I should have liked *blue* better, but Lucy wouldn't listen to blue. I can't write any more, you dear old thing; my face is beginning to ache again, and I sent Sarah down to Mitcham's for ammonia half an hour ago, and she hasn't got back yet.

"Ever, dearest R.,

"Your loving FANNY.

"P.S. When *are* you coming to see me?"

This was not the first letter of Fanny's that had made Robert Holt feel as a hungry man feels when he is disappointed in his hope of food. Hitherto he had been in the habit of re-reading such letters — of trying to persuade himself that they were not in reality so vapid, so empty, so selfish, as they had seemed to him at first; and sometimes he had succeeded in this, and had accused himself of being exigent and unreasonable. But, for the first time, he put it out of his power to do this. Fanny's letter shared the fate of the circulars, and the tea-kettle composed a new song for the occasion.

## VI.

KIRKTHWAITE lies thirty miles or so from Northscaur Bay. It is a quaint, silent little town. The streets are dark and narrow, the houses high and gabled. At the top of Moorgate there is a grand old church, with a high tower, and windows of stained glass, and a peal of bells that can be heard eight miles down the valley on quiet Sunday mornings. And beyond the church is the market cross, and some rude wooden stalls; and beyond these the dingy little back street called Mauld's Road.

No. 38, Mauld's Road, is a tiny shop with three steps leading up to the door. In the bottom of the window there are baskets of apples and potatoes, of green peas and early cabbages, and above there are sweets in bottles, brass thimbles in a

tumbler-glass, gingerbread, sealing-wax, hair-oil, bone-buttons.

At the back of the shop there is a small kitchen with a brick floor. In front of the window, which looks out on to a high white-washed wall, there is a long table covered with an ironing-blanket; and in the middle of the floor, a round table covered with a snow-white cloth. Ellen Jefferson is preparing supper; a strong smell of onions prevails, and Ellen is warm and irritable, as she usually is when there is cooking to be done in the evening. Presently the door opens; two men enter, and throw down their caps and pull off their heavy boots. One is a porter from the railway station, the other an engine-cleaner, oily and grimy, from the same place. These are two of Ellen Jefferson's lodgers; the third is in the little room over the shop.

An odd little room it is. There is a looking-glass in a wooden frame over the mantel-shelf, peacocks' feathers above it, calico flowers of many tints in vases below it, china dogs with gilt chains on either side of it. On the opposite wall is the pride of Mrs. Jefferson's life, a "Scripture piece," as she terms it, in other words, a libellous representation of Ruth and Naomi, done in worsted and framed in tarnished gilt. And on the wall opposite to the window there are three prints of favourite "ministers" framed in mahogany.

Hester Shepherd had felt instinctively that to suggest the removal of any of these works of art would be to incur her aunt's lasting displeasure, therefore no such suggestion had been made. Yet she had done what might be done to tone down the aggressive unrefinement. A pretty chintz cover had been made for the horsehair sofa; there were a few exquisitely arranged wild flowers on the table; and Hester's books were there, and a little oaken cross, and an illuminated text, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." A promise that was fulfilled more and more as the days went on.

Yet they were but sad days, and the life lived in them was but a narrow life, with little to elevate or beautify it, less to cheer or encourage it. The meagre incongruous surroundings were curiously typical. And there was strange aching of heart, too, sometimes an aching that Hester herself could hardly comprehend. It was not the pain of a divided life, that pain was already growing dull; nor was it the longing to hear once more some voice of human sympathy, though there

were times when such longings craved loudly to be satisfied. Later Hester came to see that it had been the aching of utter hopelessness, the hopelessness of a strong-natured, imaginative, warm-hearted woman, with no earthly future save this of silence, plain-sewing, isolation.

It was a sad story. A loving woman who might have been lovely, and should have been much loved, living this lonely, hard, unbeautiful outer life. But it was not the only life. God sets a man with his feet upon a certain spot of earth, but the man may make his own sky overhead—a firmament of heaven, blue and shining, or an atmosphere of sin, hot and stifling. Or he may sit in perpetual gloom, outwardly sinless, inwardly sunless; yearning for sweetness and light, but making no effort to satisfy such yearning. There is satisfaction, full and complete. No soul of man was endowed with capacities high and wide simply that such capacities might be thwarted. The universal longing for sympathy and happiness, the inexhaustible desire for perfection and holiness, have deep root in human nature. But men have to seek fruition in the Nature at once Human and Divine—in Him who created man for himself, and wills not that any should find full content and satisfaction out of Him.

Robert Holt had only met Fanny Claydon twice since that first fatal meeting. In the winter old Mark Sanderson had died, and soon afterwards Fanny had come over to Northscaur to stay with her aunt awhile. It had been a time of perplexity for Robert. At first he had been disappointed, then re-fascinated; then, after Fanny's departure, he had become dubious and dissatisfied again. But perhaps, after all, he argued, it was only that he was less happy when he was away from her, which was natural. And he was not an imaginative man. There were people given to invest the absent with virtues and attractions to which they could make no claim when present; but he, Robert Holt, was not one of these; it was difficult for him to realize virtues and attractions that really existed. So he argued with himself, but his arguments were not altogether satisfactory.

One day in the early spring he went over to Scarborough—went as Fanny's future husband, and was cordially received as such. Mr. Claydon unbent a little, and was hospitable; Mrs. Claydon bustled about a good deal, and was moth-

erly; Fanny was bright and gay and pretty as usual. On the surface all went well, and he had no time to think of anything below the surface. Every day, almost every hour, there was something to be done. Fanny's life seemed a routine of walking, dressing, shopping, visiting, receiving visitors, and drinking tea. He stayed a week, and there was an engagement for every evening, and he had the felicity of seeing Fanny treated like a spoiled, petted child everywhere. He felt bewildered as he went back, and an atmosphere of flattery, muffins, airy songs, and millinery hung about him for a week afterwards.

Light wonder, then, that as the days went on Robert Holt should come to think that there was for him no real satisfaction, no true content anywhere. Life was a failure. A glamour had fallen upon him, a glamour that had taken the similitude of love, and had caused him to miss his way. It had never been a narrow way; but the path his feet were treading now seemed broader than the old one. There was strange emptiness, too, inward and outward. His present life seemed mean and worthless; his future hollow and purposeless. He saw no way out of the difficulties into which he had brought himself. His feet were entangled. He could only drift with the tide.

And he did so drift; but it was not a painless drifting. The dead past was not buried. His memory seemed to have acquired a new and special tenacity for the things he would fain have forgotten. He tried harder work, he tried extra travelling, rushing about from one place to another on the slightest pretext; but he could not rush away from himself—from the past that was behind him, from the future that was before him.

But things could not go on forever thus. One day a letter of Fanny's roused him to a little new suffering—suffering of the aching, empty, voiceless kind; and he wondered why he had let things go on thus so long. He told himself that he still had faith in Fanny's power to make him happy with a certain kind of happiness if once they were married, once settled down quietly together in a quiet place. Perhaps he had thought too much, too hardly, of her poor little letters. She had confessed over and over again her incapacity for letter-writing. Her thoughts would not go down to the tips of her fingers, she said; and she hated trying to make them go. Better, far better,



then, for her and for himself that these unsatisfactory communications should come to an end. If even he were mistaken about that certain amount of happiness that he was anticipating, still, it would be as well for him to find out his mistake now as at a later date. Under any circumstances he would abide by what he had done. And there should be no more delay, no more cowardly shrinking from the fate that he himself had made, and now was finding stronger than himself.

It was in the early August days — the days of tall white lilies and glowing carnations, of roses and bright geraniums — that Robert Holt went over to Scarborough again, this time to fix an early day for his marriage. He had written a note to Fanny only the day before, saying that she might expect him.

South Villa, the house in which Mr. Claydon lived at that time, stands a little way out of Scarborough. It is a grey, unpretentious-looking little place, with pear-trees and rose-trees all about it, and scarlet honeysuckle growing in at the windows. A white railing forms the boundary of the garden, and beyond the railing is a dusty road, with green hedges and shady trees. Carriages come whirling by; people on horseback, some of them looking timid and scared, some astonished and awkward, some all ease and grace and elegance. Then come nursemaids with perambulators, and troops of sweet little sunburnt children, bare-legged, clad in limp holland and white cotton hats and bonnets.

Presently a tall man, wearing a grey suit, comes slowly up the road. He has a dark, fierce-looking face; but his eyes have lost some fierceness; seen near at hand, there is an expression of weariness and bitterness about him.

Reaching the white gate, sounds of laughter come to him through the open window, and a clatter of tea-cups. He rings the bell with more of violence than is really necessary, and a smart housemaid opens the door for him. Then Mrs. Claydon comes into the narrow passage, fat and very warm. "How do, Mr. Holt?" she says, putting out two reluctant fingers to be shaken. "You've come upon us rather sudden this time, haven't ya? But come yer ways in, an' made yerself at home. Fanny's havin' a few friends to tea this afternoon."

Robert hung back a moment. Would Fanny come out to him for a kiss of

greeting, as she had done before? He could hear her voice, her ringing laugh, and for a moment a faint rush of the old emotion came back as he listened. Surely she would come. But Fanny was busy with the tea-cups, and Mrs. Claydon was staring at him a little impatiently from the doorway. "Come yer ways in," she repeated. "Surely you're not going to be shy at your time o' life."

Robert did go in — a little hot, a little angry, a little disappointed. The room was full of steam, coloured muslin, expansive shirt-fronts, glances of inquiry. "How do you do?" asked a thin sweet voice from behind the urn, and a small white hand was held out to him; then half-a-dozen introductions were nervously hurried through. There was not a face that he remembered. None of Fanny's friends were the friends of six months ago. Lucy would have been there, doubtless, but she had gone with her husband to visit some friends near Carlisle.

After tea there was croquet on the back lawn, and Robert sat by the parlour window with Mrs. Claydon, looking on. He was beginning to feel curiously bewildered. Fanny's manner to him was inexplicable. In-doors her smiles, her glances had been as bright as ever, her pretty sayings as amusing; but there was some flavour wanting — something he had never missed before. Now, flitting about the lawn, just outside the window, she refused to look at him at all, tried to avoid coming quite close to him, and when he spoke to her, she pretended not to hear. Mrs. Claydon gossiped; Robert, listening to himself, answered at random; then he got up and went out under pretence of smoking a cigar.

He stood alone a moment or two on the edge of the lawn; then Fanny came up, skipping and smiling.

"Why don't you go and talk to Ellen Waters?" she said, with the arch little turn of her head that Robert knew so well. "There she is, under the chestnut-tree with a book."

"I see she is; but I don't want to talk to Ellen Waters just now. I want to talk to you."

Then deeper tones came into his voice, and a more earnest expression to his face. "Look at me, Fanny," he said. "Why are you behaving so strangely?"

Fanny looked up for one moment — a nervous, terrified look it was. Then her eyes drooped and her lips trembled, and her colour came and went rapidly. Sud-

denly she turned. "Oh, I believe it's my turn to play," she said, darting off.

It was a mistaken belief, but Fanny did not come back to Robert Holt, and Robert sauntered under the trees to smoke his cigar.

What did it all mean? he asked himself. Had he given offence in any way? or was the change in Fanny's manner simply a natural change, the result of the note he had written yesterday? It might, after all, only be a kind of shyness. People had different ways of showing embarrassment. Or perhaps she did not wish to be married yet awhile. She was very young, very girlish, and her present life was very full of the pleasures that girls seemed to care for most. . . . Then a sudden sadness came upon him — feelings that he dared not analyze, memories he dared not put into thought, prophecies he dared not look upon.

When he went back two more young men had appeared on the scene, and Mr. and Mrs. Claydon were sitting on a seat near the lawn. There was no unbending on the part of Mr. Claydon this time; he was quite himself — stiff, silent, churlish. Mrs. Claydon was again reserved for a minute or two; but she was unequal to continuous effort of this kind, and relapsed into her natural garrulity.

"That's Mr. John Gregson as is talkin' to Flory Hughes," she said, pointing to a stout young man with her knitting needle. "He'll do well in the world, will John, if he only keeps steady. An' that's Mr. Alfred Chester as is pinnin' ferns in our Fanny's hat. We're fond o' Alfred. He's an architec', and he makes a sight o' money. He's a handsome young fellow too — don't you think so, Mr. Holt?"

"Yes, he's handsome enough," Robert said, not grudgingly, but absently. He was watching Fanny more intently than he was aware of. There was no nervousness about her manner now — no trembling lips nor drooping eyelids. When Mr. Alfred Chester had arranged the ferns to his satisfaction, he placed the hat on Fanny's head with an unmistakable air of privilege; and Fanny thanked him with a mock curtsy, very pretty, very profound. Then they sauntered up and down the gravel path awhile, talking earnestly, but quite inaudibly.

Presently twilight came creeping over the fields. The mallets were thrown aside; there was silence — shadows, light dresses passing slowly to and fro under the trees in the distance. Whispering, flirting, love-making there, surprise, an-

noyance, bewilderment here. New light was breaking over Robert Holt's mind — too strange light yet. He dared not admit it.

He grew restless. It was not possible for him to sit longer listening to the ceaseless gossip of Mrs. Claydon; nor was it possible for him to put himself in the way of any opportunity for eavesdropping. He would go in-doors, he decided at last, and join Mr. Claydon, who had gone to smoke a pipe in the kitchen.

Mr. Claydon's silence was an unspeakable relief after his wife's garrulosity; yet Robert's thoughts were hardly of a more consecutive nature than they had been in the garden. It seemed to him that it would be unwise to let certain new ideas take definite form; yet he could hardly help them doing so. He had seen with his own eyes, heard with his own ears, things that he would have thought very easy to understand had the case been another's; but the case was not another's, and he was afraid of drawing inferences too readily — inferences that might bring disappointment, disappointment that might bring knowledge of a kind of which he had too much already. Escape by any means was a thing he had never dared to dream of, never permitted himself to consider possible; and he was still afraid of entertaining hope of such possibility too soon. Yet hope would come. He felt strangely confused and impatient. What was Fate going to bring him now?

They came back presently, the young people from the garden, whispering, laughing, flitting about the narrow passages, in and out of the small rooms. Then lamps were lit; some one began to play a noisy waltz, and Mrs. Claydon came into the kitchen, laughing a curious little laugh that Robert could not understand at all.

"Well, well," she said, in a resigned tone; then she laughed again, then resumed, "I've heard it said as all folks have their way, but yours *is* a queer way. I don't wonder as things have taken the turn they have. Think of a man like you sittin' here broodin' over a pipe when there's only a brick wall between him an' music an' singin', an' half-a-dozen or more of as nice-lookin' girls as you'd meet in a day's march. But you *are* a queer un, an' I've said so from the first."

Only one sentence of this speech remained with Robert Holt. What did Mrs. Claydon mean by the turn things had taken? Should he ask her? Per-



haps it would be better to wait and find out for himself. He would go back to the sitting-room. If his interpretation of the word that had been said was the right one, he would probably not have to wait long for confirmation.

It might have been thought that by this time Robert Holt would have become a little used to incongruous situations, that some little portion of his morbid sense of the ridiculous would have been blunted, but it seemed to himself as he entered Mrs. Claydon's parlour that the reverse was the case. He had to stoop as he went in; the room seemed lower than ever; the younger men seemed younger than they really were, and more graceful in figure and better mannered. He felt his age, his grimness, his rough bearing, his awkwardness. He could not breathe freely. He had a longing to rush out of doors, to stride away without once stopping, over the miles and miles of breezy moorland that stretched between him and Northscaur Bay. He would be stifled if he remained long in that atmosphere of smoky lamps, company-manners, and stale scent.

But he did remain—remained till Alfred Chester, the very last of the guests, had departed. He had told himself that it would be impossible for him to leave the house in this terrible state of suspense. The last hour had been torture. Fanny had been fascinating to bewilderment, showering her fascinations upon everybody alike, Robert Holt included. But there had been a good deal of badinage, and Robert had discovered that there was a general understanding that such fascinations should have been reserved for Mr. Alfred Chester. He was quite aware that his only sensation ought to have been one of intense relief; and he *was* relieved, but he was conscious of a good many sensations besides this, not all of them pleasant ones. It had not been pleasant for him to be compelled to witness Alfred Chester's airs of appropriation. He had not been prepared for anything of the kind, and he thought that he should have been prepared in some way or other. Without doubt he had been treated very badly.

Perhaps the same thought was in Mrs. Claydon's mind. She sat down very complacently, smoothing out her black satin apron with her fat red hands, and helped herself once more to wine and biscuits. Her manner was that of a person unassailable from any point whatever. Fanny sat on the music-stool, listlessly turn-

ing the pages of the song she had been singing. Circumstance had yet to decide what her *rôle* should be. At present her mental attitude was that of a victim.

There was silence for a minute or two. Mrs. Claydon munched her biscuit, sipped her wine. Fanny turned a little on the music-stool; suddenly Robert Holt turned too, looking full into her face.

"You would get my note yesterday?" he said abruptly.

"Yes," Fanny answered, tracing the pattern of the carpet with the toe of her boot. Then she looked up and smiled a little sarcastically. "I wasn't expecting a note of that kind, neither was I expecting a scene of any kind to-night."

"No, an' I 'ope there won't be no scenes," Mrs. Claydon broke in. "If Mr. Holt's the sensible man as folks take him to be, he won't want a deal o' explanation."

Robert restrained himself. "A single word will do," he said, hiding a grim smile.

"Many a one would ha' seen for their-selves how matters stood," resumed Mrs. Claydon, "an' wouldn't ha' needed a word—wouldn't ha' wanted to be told that a girl had changed her mind. An' I'm very glad she has changed it, an' so's her father. It never was a suitable match, as I said at first, an' as you must ha' known yerself. She's but a child to you, an' I make no doubt but she was over-persuaded. But, howiver, let bygones be bygones, Mr Holt. You must see as things are best as they are."

"I hardly know what I see yet, Mrs. Claydon," Robert said, a little absently. A good many thoughts were crowding upon his mind now, but Mrs. Claydon imagined that Robert's preoccupation was the preoccupation of deep grief.

"Of course I am aware as it must be a trial to you," she said, softening a little; "so's Fanny. She quite lost 'er appetite yesterday after she got your note, an' talked o' goin' away somewheres so as she mightn't see you. But I said as how that would be behaving badly, an' she said no more o' goin' away after that. She's been we' brought up, has Fanny; but she hasn't been herself since last night, an' she won't be till she knows as you mean to forgive and forget. Come, Mr. Holt, say a friendly word or two. Don't let us part wi' any kind o' enmity atween us. Bless you, you'll get over it sooner than you think. It'll be like a dream to you afore three months is over."

It was like a dream now, and not a pleasant dream; but Robert had a good deal of amusement to hide as well as a good deal of relief. It was not possible for him to say much. He repudiated the idea of cherishing enmity, and assented vaguely to proposals of friendship. But it was something of a disappointment to Mrs. Claydon that he said so little of his grief. "There are folks as can't talk o' anything as goes very deep," she said to Fanny afterwards.

When he rose to go, Mrs. Claydon was more friendly than ever; and Fanny held out her hand, smiled a bright winning smile, and looked up into his face with a tear or two sparkling in her wine-brown eyes.

"Say you won't think harshly of me," she said, in a sweet little voice of entreaty.

"It wouldn't be possible," Robert said, with a smile as bright in its way as Fanny's own.

They parted then. Robert Holt's illusion was over. Certainly he was a sadder and a wiser man, but the weight of sadness had not come down upon him yet. His thoughts were chiefly of the unexpected relief that had come. The burden that he had borne so long seemed greater than ever, now that it had fallen from him. The life that he had before refused to look at, he faced with a shudder now. *Could he have endured it? . . . And he felt humiliated too—*

Shamed through all his nature  
To have loved so slight a thing,

if indeed he had loved her. But it was not pleasant for him to look back. He tried to put this part of his life away from him, as men try to put away all recollection of the delusions of a fevered brain, but it was a difficult matter. There was nothing in the present or the future that he could turn to with any satisfaction. All was barren, and blank, and dreary. He might be at peace, but it would be the peace of the desert—an empty, desolate peace.

#### VII.

THOSE who do not get virtue out of suffering get knowledge—so much real sorrow, so much real experience. It seems a hard bargain; the loss appears greater than the gain; yet there is gain, if a man could realize it in time for comfort; but we do not find it till after many days—till the need for comfort, is, so to speak, half over.

With Robert Holt the many days passed slowly, sadly, unprofitably. A strange unrest was with him. It seemed to him that any alternation of pleasure and pain would have been better than this utter lifelessness—any interchange of hope and disappointment better than this utter hopelessness. Where should he go? what should he do? he asked himself during the long dreary winter. If there was no fountain for such nameless thirst as his, was there no Lethæan draught anywhere? Could he never escape from the recollections that had such vitality in them—such power to pierce and sting?

There have been many since Themistocles who would gladly have learnt the art of forgetting, gladly have acquired the power to shut out the old memories that lie enshrined in the heart, fresh, green, vigorous, blooming there like flowers on the graves of the dead. We would be quiet in the present, if we only might. We would restrain ourselves from any cravings; we would do our duties faithfully; we would strive to the utmost; we would practise any and every virtue we might have strength for—all this and more, if we could only be at rest. Through much sorrow we come to be very unenvious; and if we learn nothing else, we learn to be reasonable in our demands. We smile pitifully at the old visions; they were so bright, so large! What a little would content us now! A single note of the song that thrilled us, a single word from the lips that spoke and smiled for us the whole day long.

It may be said that if Robert Holt's life had been a less solitary life, the hunger pains that beset him would have had less opportunity for development; but he was altogether alone, and his loneliness was becoming a more intolerable thing to him daily. Going homeward in the twilight, to the old red house on the cliff, to his empty rooms, his desolate fireside, it seemed to him as if the plaining winter winds swept through his very soul. A fisherman with a child in his arms, a cottage fire lighting up the home faces gathered round it, a pair of lovers in the lane—all these things touched him somewhere. Strong man as he was, there were times when he could have wept without knowing why.

Robert Holt knew nothing of the theory of unconscious cerebration; if he had, he might perhaps have explained for himself certain things that puzzled him. It was but rarely, very rarely, that he

thought consciously of Hester Shepherd, but he was conscious every day and every hour of a certain subtle influence that seemed hers. It appeared to him as if every act of his life were done in her sight. When he did think of her, it was without effort, without any recognition of a change of subject. There were times when he wondered if it would be always thus; when he told himself that he might probably come to be content with this mysterious sense of nearness. But as the days went on these times grew rarer; the longing for some more definite, more material knowledge of her began to haunt him wherever he went. If he might but know that she was happy, or content, or at least that she was suffering no privation, he would be satisfied. He had no desire for any intercourse. If he could see her once afar off, learn from some friend what her life was, assure himself that she had no need of any aid of his, he would come back to his dreary life willingly. He was no idealist; but the hunger and aching of heart that he had endured, had rounded certain angles of his nature wonderfully. And it had been a help to clearness of vision too. He was beginning to see that there were more things in heaven and earth than had been dreamt of in his philosophy.

The longing to see Hester grew apace with the growing days. It seemed to him that the merest glimpse of her would have the effect of making his after-life seem a less sad and dreary and purposeless thing. He mused over it till it fevered him. There could be no more work done, no more plans made, no more days of sad unhopeful routine, until he had satisfied himself thus far.

It was towards the end of December when he set out on his silent errand. A strange errand for such a man! He had wavered a good deal at the last; but the deciding thought had been the thought, perhaps the hope, that Hester might be in some adversity or other; that perhaps he might have the satisfaction of befriending her in some way without her knowledge. He was very careful to hold in his thoughts and his hopes. He would give no rein to his imagination.

Yet he could not help the tremor that came over him as he left the Windmill, an old whitewashed house with green shutters that stood at the top of Moor-gate. He knew the way to Mauld's Road, across the sleepy little marketplace, beyond the wooden stalls, by dingy little shops with dim oil lamps burning

somewhere on the counter. There were very few passers by; and he began to slacken his pace a little as he went along the tiny street; and to try to recover himself. What did it matter? No one would see him; and he was not likely to see any one for whom he cared. Which was the shop? This one was full of crockery ware, that of ribbons. A feeble light streamed from behind the ribbons, glinting across the street, lighting up the rags that clothed a little brother and sister standing near the window of the opposite shop.

A window with oranges in it, and red-cheeked apples, and box and laurel, and red-berried holly. "Because it's Christmas, you know, Joe," the girl said. And the boy looked up quickly. "Is it?" he inquired. "Then I'll go in an ax Miss Shepherd for a horange. She said she'd give me one at Krussamas if I took old Nan's milk up ivery daäy athoot spillin' on't."

They went in together, the little ragged pair, and Ellen Jefferson's disappointment was expressed in the sharp tone in which she called Hester down from the room above. Robert Holt was standing very near the step as Hester crossed the small space between the door and the counter, his power of self-control strained to the utmost tension by the thrill that swept over him. "What is it, Joe?" Hester said, taking the round chubby cheeks between her large white hands. Her voice was changed, but it was strangely sweet still; and her smile seemed even sweeter than of old, and more gentle, and more earnest.

"Wish a merry Krussamas an' a 'appy new 'ear, Miss Shepherd, an' Mrs. Jefferson, an' Mr. Barnes, an' Mr. Smithson," Joe said, in a hurried, shamefaced way. And Hester smiled. "Thank you, Joe," she said, but her voice faltered a little, and when she spoke again, there was a pathetic cadence in her tone that stirred Robert Holt's very soul. Then she turned to reach the oranges, and he saw that she looked a little wan, a little faded; and it seemed to him that her movements were listless and her attitudes more nerveless and lifeless than he had seen them before.

Yet more than ever she seemed to him beautiful, more than ever a woman grand, benign, calm, good; a woman to raise a man's soul from the dust, to comfort him, strengthen him, redeem his life "from too thin breathing." So, as Robert Holt turned away into the darkness, he felt as if already some new life had entered into

him; expanding his thoughts, kindling his hopes, bringing fresh knowledge of himself, of Hester; suggesting to him a possible future for them both. Why should there not be that friendship of which Hester herself had once spoken? A friendship of the highest, purest, most spiritual kind. She was capable of this, as few women were, he told himself. She would comprehend it from the beginning without any written code; she would be content that it should be a friendship altogether unacknowledged, unmaterialized by words, visible only in a glance, a subtle sense of sympathy; in the consciousness of a finer and higher relationship. Let him meet her once, see her face to face, once with new light within him, and she would be quick to see the light, quick to do her part in establishing this new order of things. There would be no need for frequent intercourse; a note, a letter by the way; a chance meeting as the years went on, he would desire nothing more. Nor would she. He could live the intermediate life very calmly, live it in her sight always, as he had done before; but it would never again be the same life that it had been of late, never again so isolated, so non-appreciated. He would once assure himself of her attitude toward him; and he would bear about with him the high support of that attitude forever after. He had no doubts. He had nothing to ask of her. This that he desired would be given without asking if it could be given at all. Her soul would gravitate towards his, as his towards hers, of necessity.

So he thought as he went back to the Windmill. He did not ask himself whether he was happy, whether he would ever be happy, but he was strangely calm and contented. All he had to do now was to bring about the meeting in a natural way. There must be no suddenness, no intrusion; nothing to cause any jar or difficulty.

But this was less easy than it had seemed. Difficulties came from within, memories of wrong and offence; remorse, doubt, and a sense of unworthiness. All day these things kept possession of his mind; and when night came again they kept possession still. Up and down the dreary little road he wandered, backward and forward when the feeble light streamed from behind the boxes of ribbon. There was a light in the window of Hester's little room till ten o'clock, then a shadow crossed the blind and the light disappeared; and Robert went on his

way again, less satisfied with that idea of a perfect friendship, more sad, and doubtful, and hungry.

When morning came there was a changed world, a wild snow-storm swept over and all around the little town. It would have been a busy day in the market had the weather been fine, for it was Christmas Eve, and the farmers' wives had brought in large cans of "furmity," or "creaved"\* wheat, for the Christmas Eve suppers of the good people of Kirkthwaite, and also barrels of milk wherewith to prepare it, and boughs of red-berried holly wherewith to deck the windows, and the picture-frames, and the supper-tables. But the snow-covered carts made their way to the doors of the little shops this morning; and quaint white figures crept noiselessly about the streets; and the wind whirled the snow into heavy drifts under the projecting windows, and by the numerous steps. It was a silent day without; and for Robert Holt who sat by the window of the little inn parlour, it was a cheerless and a hopeless day.

Toward evening the sky began to break a little; the grey changed to a deep clear indigo, and the moon rose over the hills beyond Kirkthwaite, silvering the edges of the purple clouds, disclosing the soft outlines of the folding uplands, gleaming upon the white high-peaked roofs of the town, throwing a pale mysterious beauty everywhere.

Once more Robert Holt went out, once more he turned his steps towards Mauld's Road; but a little beyond, in the lane leading toward Kirkthwaite Hall, he saw a dark graceful figure by the white hedge-row. She was carrying a parcel, "plain-sewing, doubtless," Robert said to himself as half-unconsciously he turned into the same path.

For some distance he followed her, through the fields, through the fir-wood, almost to the gate of the avenue; growing more tremulous, more painfully athirst in soul at every step. Hester disappeared through the gate; and Robert stood leaning against the trunk of a fir-tree on the edge of the little copse.

Standing there, the silent weird beauty without, the silent weight of pain within, Robert Holt was no longer haunted by the strange unrest that had filled him; even remorse was present no longer, no doubt nor anxiety of any kind. His calmness was not that of despair, but it

\* Creaved — pre-boiled.

was akin to it. He had so little to hope for, that it seemed hardly worth hoping at all; he had nothing even to fear, he told himself. He was rigid with misery. Coldness and sickness were at his heart; and it seemed to him as if they must remain there forever.

Presently he heard the click of the gate again. The time had not seemed long; the sound was no joy to him. He waited very calmly. The dark figure came onward, under the glittering fir-trees, by the snow-laden bushes. He heard the light foot-fall, saw by the streaming moonlight a pale uplifted face, gentle, earnest, intense. Then he stepped forward and held out his hand, and a low, sweet voice said calmly, yet eagerly, "Robert! is it you?"

He made no answer. The soft clear grey eyes that looked into his without surprise, without embarrassment, seemed to hold him spell-bound. He grew tremulous again, his heavily drawn breath became audible; and Hester began to understand, and understanding to pity.

"Have you come all this way on purpose to see me?" she asked with her old quiet smile. And Robert said that he had; and then another silence followed, intense, instinct in every moment of it with deep emotion.

"Don't be afraid of me, Hester," Robert said at last, in tones strange and touching, all the more touching because of evident effort for self-control. "Don't be afraid of me. I haven't come here to ask anything that can distress you, to disturb your peace of mind in any way. I can hardly tell why I have come. . . . But I mustn't keep you standing here in the snow. May I walk back with you?"

"Certainly," Hester said, turning homeward. "And don't try to find any excuse for coming to see an old friend. I begged you to come, you know; and I needn't say I'm glad to see you."

Robert sighed. If only Hester had been less calm, less unembarrassed. Why did she talk in that indifferent way? But there was an undercurrent of doubt in him as to whether her indifference was real. He had heard her speak in tones like these before — quiet, even, but with just a suspicion of unnaturalness in them.

They were walking slowly down the lane that led into Moorgate now. There were trees overhead, the leafless interwoven boughs glittering like a canopy of silver-frosted lacework; soft shadows

were on the pathway; twinkling lights in the distance. Then the chime of the old church bells came through the silence. It was the time of evening prayer.

"Are you tired after your journey?" Hester asked, looking up to the pale, stony face by her side.

"No," Robert answered. "I have had no journey to-day. I came on Monday."

Hester said nothing of her surprise. "Perhaps you will come to church with me, then," she asked, "and go home with me afterward to tea. Aunt Ellen will be glad to see you."

Both invitations were accepted. Prayers were read in the dimly-lighted old church; there was an atmosphere of calmness, of consolation; a new realization of the old words, "Peace on earth, good-will to men." The text was written in letters of gold, and bordered with holly; but Robert knew nothing of this; he could have said some one whispered it to him. Perhaps Hester standing there by him, the light falling upon her shining hair, upon her peaceful face. More than peaceful it was. The soft low tones of the organ were rolling away up to the roof; a sweet, clear voice was singing the *Nunc Dimittis*.

They went homeward. There was music in the street; and a group of carol-singers trudging through the snow that nearly blocked up Mauld's Road. "You will come in?" Hester said, observing that Robert drew back when they reached the step that led up to the little shop; but he shook his head, and held out his hand.

"I cannot this evening," he answered, in an absent, dreamy way. "I have seen you — that was what I came for. . . . I must see you again, though. May I come to-morrow?"

Perhaps he read his answer in the pitying, loving eyes that looked into his — it may be that he read more than the answer he expected just then.

"Yet I can't, I daren't be thankful," he said aloud, as he rushed onward through the snow. "I daren't be thankful yet." But it had come to him suddenly, strongly, in that last unutterable look, that he had ground for thankfulness. Should he go back? It was yet early in the evening. The impulse was overmastering.

Hester had gone up to her room very quietly; and she had put away her bonnet, smoothed her hair, and returned to the little sitting-room without pausing anywhere to think. But emotion is swift-



er and stronger than thought. The events that had come into her uneventful life during the past hour were not to be ignored. Why had he come? Why was he so strange? What depth of suffering had humbled him in this way? That he had suffered she knew certainly—there is a freemasonry in sorrow. And conjecturing what his sorrow might be, she could hardly forget her own; it seemed to come back upon her with new keenness—if indeed that could be said to come back that had never been absent.

But this was only for a moment. Swift as lightning an unbidden thought crossed her brain—a nameless, unbidden hope. Not the hope that in Robert Holt's heart there was still love for her—she had never doubted that, never once through this long time of unfaithfulness had she doubted that, unknown to himself, he was still faithful. She knew better than he what real love was, knew more than he of its deathlessness, its power to influence a human soul after a dozen lower fancies have swayed it hither and thither. The thought that came to her now was a thought that perhaps the meaner love in him was dead, or dying; that he was finding out the mistake he had made. But what then? Was he not still bound by it? Here was his sorrow, doubtless; and no light sorrow either. Hester Shepherd could see no way out of it for him, save a dishonourable way. It was a dark future—everything was dark; and life was full of mistakes, and the world was full of strife and sorrow and tears. Hot, bitter tears, such as Hester Shepherd had never shed before, came streaming down her face; her whole frame shook with emotion as she knelt by the little sofa.

She had knelt there some time; her tears were dried; she was calmer and stronger, when Mrs. Jefferson showed Robert Holt the staircase that led up to the little room. But traces of the tears were visible on Hester's face still, and her heavy white eyelids seemed to droop with a weight of tears yet unshed. Robert Holt's first impulse was to throw himself at her feet, to kneel there, not till Hester forgave him, but till he could forgive himself. Her calmness, her utter unembarrassment restrained him. For a moment or two he stood looking into the fire, pale, hesitant, doubtful. Then he took Hester's hand, and drew her nearer to him. She made no resistance. They stood for a moment or two, each in that moment acquiring knowledge of the

other. Robert Holt would not be standing there, standing thus, unless he were free so to stand, Hester told herself with a thrill that swept through her, lightening her heart of doubt and misery and pain. And once more their eyes met, once more Robert Holt saw the look of unutterable love and faith that had inspired him so suddenly with hope and resolution.

"Is it possible that you have forgiven me?" he said at last, in hoarse, broken tones.

"Quite possible!" Hester said. Her calmness was giving way a little now; there was a quiver in her voice, her face was a little averted.

"Thank you," he said. "I don't deserve it. I deserve nothing at your hands, hardly even pity. But if I had thought only of my deserts, I shouldn't have been standing here now."

Then he told her how it came to pass that he stood there,—told her of the long, painful year of punishment that he had endured, of his unexpected release, his sadness and isolation, and of the strong yearning that had come upon him to see her once again.

"I told you the truth this evening when I said that I had not come to distress you, to disturb your peace of mind in any way," he continued, still trying to speak calmly; "but it is not all the truth, though I thought it was. I thought I only wanted to see you, to hear you speak, to ask your forgiveness. But I have more to ask than this. . . . I must ask it, Hester. . . . Is it possible to efface the past? Will a whole life of tenderness and truth efface it? Can you, will you try to love me as if that past had never been?"

Hester looked up—there was meaning in her eyes that it was impossible to question, impossible to mistake.

"Will you promise to believe me if I tell you the simple truth?" she said, laying one hand gently on Robert's shoulder. "Will you try to understand me when I tell you that until I learnt to suffer for love, I never knew what love was?"

Robert Holt did not say whether he understood; for some moments he said nothing, moments "big as years," not to be forgotten, not to be written of here.

Indeed, there is little more that may be written. The one or two hours of supreme happiness that come into most lives are too much above ordinary experience to be put into ordinary words. Hester's joy was not as Robert Holt's joy, nor Robert Holt's joy as hers. On

one side there was the transcendent felicity of forgiving; on the other, the ineffable relief of being forgiven. Hers was the higher satisfaction, his the deeper. Almost too deep, it seemed to Hester. His silent sympathy, his humility, his half-sad, hesitant tenderness, as he began to perceive how she had suffered, touched her with a sense of pain, almost of unworthiness. What had she done that her life should be crowned with a crown like this?

A clang of bells sounded from the old church tower at midnight, moving some hearts to sadness, some to joy, lifting some above all earthly joys and sorrows. To Hester, standing by the window of her little room, the world seemed one wide home of light and peace. There was light and peace without, upon the snow-clad hills, in the dark fir-wood, over the quaint old town. There was light and peace within, upon the sweet new present, upon the shadowy past, upon the bright, hope-lit future.

People whose whole life is one long happiness, never know what happiness is. Here is a paradox, but with truth in it. Joy coming after sorrow is joy indeed, a very glory of joy. "Out of great tribulation." This shall heighten the crowning joy of all.

From Temple Bar.

RICHARD STEELE.

HUMAN life is a mere inheritance of regrets: those who have no hope for the future often commit suicide, like London-derry and Romilly, or go mad, like Swift. The most successful of men, if they have any conscience left, live only to deplore the fact that they have not done one-half what they could have done under other circumstances, and that those circumstances were, nine times out of ten, after the first success, potentially of their own creation. Sir Richard Steele, not entirely an unsuccessful man, must have thought somewhat with us when he took *his* inheritance of regrets to Carmarthen and lay down to die — when he, as Swift says, with his cruel untruth,

From perils of a hundred gaols  
Withdrew, to starve and die in Wales.

That the above lines are utterly untrue we need hardly say. When the Dean was offended he grew angry; when he

grew angry he remained so; when he was in a permanent state of anger he was probably one of the most unscrupulous men who ever lived. Steele went to Carmarthen to die, but hardly a beggar; his creditors were almost paid, and a balance was left for his daughter. Regrets and failures he had for his portion, beyond the portion of most men; but his end was tolerably peaceful, considering that he was a disappointed man. It is possible that most of our readers would elect to die like Richard Steele, and not as his bitter enemy, Jonathan Swift; there is a difference between dying mad with baffled ambition like Swift, and sinking quietly down like a tired child as did Steele.

Their quarrels are finished now, and let us hope that their regrets for them are over also; light lie the earth over both their hearts, for with all their faults and errors they are dear friends to every one speaking or reading the English language. Out from the confused dark night of early childish recollection two white hands are stretched towards us before all others. One points to gigantic figures upon the wall, when the nursery light is growing dim, and we perchance are getting frightened: there is no need to fear; it is only the hand of Lemuel Gulliver; and the Brobdingnags on the wall are only the shades of the sleeping nursemaid. Where does this other hand point, while we sit up in our cribs, with the Lilliputians crowding over our bed, and binding us with cords not to be loosened until the earth goes on our coffin? This second hand points downstairs, where the Christmas music is playing, and our sisters are footing it in the dance with Sir Roger de Coverly. Gulliver and Sir Roger — Swift and Steele — are almost our earliest friends, when all is said and done. More than one other writer may have said this in better language than our own, but the fact is the same. Human life is made up of regrets, we repeat, and many of those regrets arise from the death or estrangement of early friends; many die and are forgotten, others by no means develop into what we in our boyish ardour expected; and with regard to others again, we wonder how we ever could have believed in them for a moment; Sir Roger and Gulliver, however, are among the few ideal friends who kept their own place: of Sir Roger we still believe that he is the most charming old gentleman in existence, and that paper 410 was written by Tickell and not by

Steele; of Gulliver we retain the opinion that he was a gentleman of agreeable manners, combining strong political and social opinions with the modesty which is the inseparable accident of all great travellers. We defend neither on all points; Sir Roger frequently laid himself out to misconstruction, and Gulliver's behaviour on one occasion, at the court of Lilliput, was ill-considered. Certainly in compassing his political ruin it was rather hard of his enemies to rake up an old statute against him, but the St. Pancras Vestry are doing exactly the same in raking up an act of the godly Charles the Second against Sunday traders: on all details we are not answerable for either Gulliver or Sir Roger, but they are certainly the first, and, with few exceptions, the most lasting of our friends.

There was a wild delusion afloat in our youth that "Gulliver's Travels" and the "Spectator" were both "British classics," and might consequently be put into the hands of childhood; from that cause, probably, we so early made the acquaintance of Sir Roger and Mr. Gulliver. We can only say that more people must have talked about those books than have read them: there is a coolness about parts of both which we will not discuss in an age when Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" are elegantly published *in extenso*, and only not read because a great majority of people are puzzled at the dialect. But it must be said, as a general rule, as regards both Swift and Steele, that the flies can be put on one plate and the butter on another: both are capable of being Bowdlerized; a Bowdlerized Smollett would be rather dull reading. Mr. Thackeray goes as far as to say that "Humphrey Clinker" is "surely the funniest book ever written;" will any one undertake to read the "fun" at a penny reading, before working-men's wives? It is extremely strange that both Mr. Dickens and Mr. Thackeray, two men whose writings were so singularly pure, should have quoted Smollett as such a witty writer, and have considered him, or affected to consider him, their master; it would puzzle any one to find a witty passage in Dickens or Thackeray with a *double entendre* in it; it would puzzle any man to find a funny passage in Smollett without one.

Sir Roger is peculiarly the creation of Steele, though greatly developed by Addison; they worked on him almost alternately, Steele writing one-third of the papers and Addison nearly two-thirds;

Budgell and Tickell wrote three or four. The unfortunate paper, No. 410, must either have been written by Steele at a time when he could write to his wife this rather singular letter,

"DEAR PRUE, — Sober or not, I am ever yours,

"RICHARD STEELE."

"Feb. 16, 1716" —

or by Tickell; we are unlikely to find out the truth now, but we are almost afraid that we must father it on Steele.

Possibly a short account of Sir Richard Steele himself claims our first attention. For one who knows the real life of Sir Richard Steele a dozen know the imaginary life of Sir Roger de Coverley; a vague impression which seems to prevail in the cheap literature of twenty years ago is, that Steele was a trooper in the Life Guards, perniciously given to drink, who by some mysterious means got into the House of Commons and was promptly expelled. The cheap literature of the present day, written as it is by scholars and gentlemen, is somehow scarcely fair to him; let us try to be so, never omitting to mention his faults, or on the other hand to sneer at his virtues, though the temptation to do the latter is strong at times. He was particularly connected with many great men, literary and other: standing as he does between two of our greatest heroes of literature, he is in an unenviable position. From all that we can gather, he was as virtuous regarding women as Swift himself, though he had neither a Stella nor a Vanessa; with regard to liquor, he found himself in excellent company, including Addison, and at one time Johnson. It was a drinking age, and he drank. Steele's drinking, on examination, seems to have been tolerably harmless, as far as such a vice can be harmless; it only led to an illimitable and almost inconceivable muddle of his pecuniary affairs. Yet he left the world when the world was in his debt, and the worst vices he exhibited were those of silly profusion in private matters, and a habit of pig-headed stupid honesty in public ones.

Steele was an Irishman. It is no use disguising the fact, but he was as much an Irishman as Swift, Curran, Grattan, Wellington, Palmerston, or O'Connell. It is perfectly idle to write at the end of your advertisements "No Irish need apply;" the Irish always do apply; and so persistently that they generally get listened to, after the manner of the impor-

fortunate widow; once put an Irishman into a place, however, and you find that he is about the most diligent and conscientious man you can get; shrewd, mobile, and dependent, he will do your work as well as any Englishman or Scotchman. When he has to originate work for himself the genius of his nation is apt to lead him into flights of fancy which are not easily followed by pig-headed English or Scotch; though even the other two nations have done some rather alarming things in the financial way with other people's money. Steele was an Irishman, so he was always looking for support elsewhere; and an Irishman again in his habit of indomitable pluck. No insult or disappointment troubled him long; he was up again to his work as soon as he was out of the last trouble. In another point, that about women, he was the true Irishman; he pinned his faith and love on one woman, and he tenderly courted her to the day of his death. She was very stupid and very ill-tempered at times, but it made no difference to him: she certainly, had like the late Mrs. Pecksniff, "a little property," but it is hard to believe that it had much influence with him. If he had been the reckless fellow which some have tried to make him, he would have shaken himself free from her, instead of always praying her to stay with him and merely keep her temper; it is not much for a man to ask, but we are afraid that he asked it in vain sometimes.

He was born, as some say, in 1671, at Dublin, the son of a barrister of good family. His mother was a Gascoigne, of whom we know very little. He lost his father very early—a loss which has produced possibly one of the most perfect pieces of writing known: it is familiar to most, but so exquisite that we must ask our readers to allow us to write it down again:

The first sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with a real understanding *why nobody was willing to play with me*. I remember I went into the room where the body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a beating the coffin, and calling "Papa!" for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms—almost smothered me in her embraces—and told me in a flood of tears, "Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him

under ground, whence he could never come to us again."

Enough. "Shall I go on?" says Sterne, in his death of Le Fevre, "No." We quite agree with Mr. Sterne; Le Fevre is pathetic, and the dead donkey is tolerable, but Mr. Sterne never wrote anything comparable to this story of the battledore and the coffin, for the simple reason that he had not got it in him.

Steele went to the Charterhouse, now removed into the Surrey hills: to name the wonderful men who have come from Charterhouse would require quite as large a volume as that which is required to give the school roll of Harrow or Eton. On comparing notes, one discovers that a vast number of the scholars of all the great public schools have succeeded in making a considerable mess in the councils of the nation; Sir Richard Steele did his best in this respect, but only succeeded in making a rather tolerable mess of his own affairs, the nation being left comparatively uninjured. Here he made the acquaintance of Addison, and formed a life-long friendship, that is, until they fell out late in life and used extremely strong language to one another. Doctor Johnson, by a (for him) rather foolish mistake, makes Addison speak of Steele as "little Dicky;" the fact being that the "little Dicky" spoken of by Addison was a dwarfish actor, who played Gomez in Dryden's "Spanish Friar." This long friendship between Steele and Addison lasted nearly through everything; they were not enemies at Addison's death, though Steele had tried his gentle temper rather sorely at one time; he borrowed a thousand pounds of him, and that he paid; he then borrowed a hundred pounds, and the use he made of it exasperated Addison so that he recovered it by law. Still the friendship went on. Lord Macaulay, in accounting for this action of Addison's, finds no excuse for it in his own mind, and so creates what he confesses to be a purely imaginary story; his lordship need not have written a scene from a novel to account for it. The simple fact is that Addison, who was very poor, thought that Steele could pay him, but would not; he therefore gave Steele a very proper lesson, though we are of opinion that he forced Steele to rob Peter in order to pay Paul. Steele and Mr. Micawber have a great deal in common as regards their monetary transactions; the difference between them is that Steele always had some

money, and Mr. Micawber never had any.

From the Charterhouse Steele went to Oxford, and like his more famous school-fellow, Thackeray, left Oxford, as Thackeray did Cambridge, without taking a degree. He wrote a comedy at Oxford, and some verses of his are dated 1695, which would be certainly damned for the Newdegate in any ordinary year. They are certainly incomparably inferior to Heber's "Palestine," or Mr. Edwin Arnold's "Belshazzar." We doubt if the theatre at Oxford, with all its loyalty, would stand the following lines, even about Queen Victoria :

I see her yet, nature and fortune's pride.  
A sceptre graced her hand, a king her side;  
Celestial youth and beauty did impart  
Ecstatic visions to the coldest heart.

Steele was not a poet; he thought that he would like to be a soldier, and he went as cadet in the Horse Guards. His position was practically that of a trooper until he had thoroughly learned his duty; but then his next move out of the ranks would have been not *corporal* or non-commissioned officer, but *ensign*, or commissioned officer; therefore it is somewhat incorrect to say that Sir Richard Steele, M.P., was ever a *trooper*; he had to do stable, guard, and such duties *with* troopers, but it is very doubtful if he ever messed with them: any man who has been in certain services knows, as well as we do ourselves, the vast difference between a cadet and a trooper; the one is received in the drawing-room, the other never passes the kitchen; what were the rules of the service in Steele's time we do not know. Likewise, from comparing various biographies of him, we remain completely puzzled as to the various regiments in which he served. He certainly enlisted as a volunteer in the Life Guards, which consists of cavalry. Then we find him in the Coldstreams, which is now a foot regiment, under Lord Cutts. Then he was ensign, and afterwards captain in the Fusiliers, under Lord Lucas, at which time he was secretary to Lord Cutts, "the vainest old fool alive," says Swift. Did Lord Cutts or his secretary write

Only tell her that I love,  
Leave the rest to her and fate;  
Some kind planet from above  
May perhaps her pity move.  
Lovers on their stars must wait.  
Only tell her that I love.

Why, oh, why should I despair?  
Mercy's pictured in her eye.  
If she once vouchsafes to hear,  
Welcome hope and welcome fear.  
She's too good to let me die;  
Why, oh, why should I despair?

We suspect that this very pretty balderdash is straight from the noble hand of Lord Cutts. Steele, when, like Silas Wegg, he "dropped into poetry," never wrote such extremely pretty verses or such illimitable nonsense.

At this time Steele seems to have been divided between his extreme satisfaction at the enjoyment of the pleasures of this wicked world, and a very strong opinion that there was a next one. He was very much dissatisfied with himself: he was very fond of eating, drinking, and sleeping, but he felt that there was something higher and nobler than the mere discharge of physical functions in a way which produced the contentment of a fattening hog, in clean straw, in a warm sty. When men get into this state of mind they mostly seek a formula, by which to express, to themselves firstly, and to God afterwards, their desire of a higher life. Men generally seize the first formula which comes to their hand—a fact by no means unknown to our friends the Jesuits or to our friends the Methodists; the former would lead a man into slavery as dark as that of Comte (we are only quoting Mr. John Stuart Mill), the latter would leave a man nearly perfect political freedom. It was rather fortunate for Ensign Steele that when he found himself "awakened" there was not a Romish priest handy; he was perfectly ready for one, and a great convert has been lost. Sensitive and—we will not write the second epithet—natures like his are utterly abroad without religion. Steele took to religion with the formulas which were most familiar to him, and what is more, he stuck to his religion with all his faults. The key to the whole man's life is, that he created a high standard for himself, and was eternally vexed that he could not attain it. Addison never erected any particular standard; he could not *help* being good; Becky Sharp says that anybody could be good with three thousand a year. We doubt that, because we have seen a great many people who were extremely naughty on four times the money. But we say that Addison was good, because he had a perfect temper, unswerving honesty, and a heart and soul entirely incapable of wrong-doing in any shape or form. A



world of Addisons would be so perfect that any improvement on it would become an unnecessary impertinence: poor Ensign Steele had Addison and William the Third in his mind's eye when he wrote "The Christian Hero" and dedicated it—to Lord Cutts!

The effect of this work was not by any means encouraging. We knew an old lady once, who, in a fit of absence of mind, said grace before sitting down to a rubber of whist. A traditional sporting parson is said to have given out from the reading-desk, "the Collect for the Sunday next before the Derby." Steele's "Christian Hero" was received by the mess of the Fusiliers very much as though a gentleman were to propose to read prayers at Tattersall's the night before the St. Leger. It was all as good as—as Addison, but it would not do; the fact was that he was not in a position to preach; his comrades might quote against him:

Some parsons are like finger-posts,  
I've often heard them say.  
They never go to heaven themselves,  
But only point the way.

A doctor who will not take his own medicine inspires little confidence; but when a man preaches and does not practise he does an infinity of positive harm. There is no set of men who have served the state better, or done more to raise the moral tone of their associates, than the religious soldier, such as a Gardiner, a Havelock, or a Lieutenant Willoughby; but then they showed the fruit of their teaching in their own lives; we fear that Steele did not.

About this time he fought a duel: two officers quarrelled, and Steele made the peace between them with such success that the one with whom he had used his strongest efforts was persuaded that Steele was in the interest of his antagonist and challenged the peace-maker. Steele was only just recovering from an illness, but was forced to go out, and wounded his man very severely. Adams seems to think that this duel arose indirectly from the badinage which Steele received about the "Christian Hero:" he certainly was in a fair way of never hearing the last of that most ill-timed publication. To save his character he wrote a play, which being very successful, he was forgiven. He had now the character which Mrs. Quickly gives to John Rugby. "No tell-tale nor breed-hate. His worst fault is, that he is given

to prayer; he is something peevish that way; but nobody but has his fault. Let that pass."

The writing of a play at that time was a rather audacious change from the "Christian Hero" style of literature: the stock argument of most plays was conjugal infidelity of the most shameless kind. Lamb, in defending such plays as were written by Wycherly and Vanbrugh, says that they pretend to no morality because they were written by men who merely created an imaginary picture of society in which morality was a mere matter of philosophical speculation: not by any means a powerful defence, from the most dearly-loved essayist of England after Addison: the fact was that Lamb could not help admiring the great constructive powers and the brilliant wit of these plays, and so he made the best he could of them; he had much better have let them take care of themselves. On certain grounds they are hideously immoral; a *Jacquerie* or a *Reign of Terror* would be perfectly justifiable if the morals of the reigning class were so atrocious as they are described in the plays of the Restoration and those immediately following it. Aphra Behn can be pretty strong, but she is generally considered to write on the side of virtue: in the majority of plays at the latter end of the seventeenth century, the popular hero was the adulterer. Lord Macaulay lays all this to the credit of the Puritans; Leigh Hunt is rather more feeble in his excuses than Charles Lamb for these astounding plays. The fact lies in a nutshell; both Charles Lamb and Leigh Hunt saw with their exquisitely critical eyes points of construction and brightness of dialogue rarely equalled in any age; the plays were condemned for their immorality, yet they were so good in particular ways that something had to be said for them. The blacker the negro, the more whitewash required, and certainly Lamb and Hunt daubed them with somewhat untempered mortar.

Steele wrote a respectable play: *Jeremy Collier*, in 1698, had published his attack on the English stage. He had won, having beaten even Congreve. Steele's play, "The Funeral, or Grief à la mode," was acted in 1702, and Steele had the benefit of seeing the change in public opinion. "The Funeral" is respectable, but surely extremely dull reading, in spite of Sydney Smith, who, being, like Dickens and Thackeray, far higher than the men he pretended to

adore, used them as clothes-horses. The women are rather idiots, are they not? Why anybody wanted to marry any of them is rather a mystery; they did not seem to know anything; they required a great deal more winning than they were worth: they are intolerably affected and dictatorial before marriage; what they were after one can only guess.

The theory which underlies this play, and one-half of the more tolerable virtuous plays and novels which followed, is this. A man is determined to marry a particular woman, and she at once puts on every air of silly coquetry of which she is mistress; the more silly and petulant she is, the more he is supposed to be determined to gain her. Swift, in one of his nameless hideous horrors, has satirized this supposed habit of women in a way which makes one inclined to assist Mr. Calcraft in hanging him. But is the fact true with the majority of women, or was it ever true? Men don't want women to rush into their arms; but a woman who keeps a man at bay too long, through sheer humbug, may gain an ardent lover, but will find herself linked to an exceedingly suspicious husband — a husband who watches for her to make up the arrears of that confidence which she lost in her pre-matrimonial childishnesses.

Steele's women are the women of mediocre eighteenth century comedy: and they have at times a rather alarming family likeness to Lady Steele and Lady Warwick, as far as we can judge of those two ladies from the extremely small means at our command. Both Addison and Steele seem to have suffered from the same domestic trouble. Addison, his detractors say, used to take refuge from the wife of his bosom at Button's, where he took more wine than was good for a delicate constitution like his; he could not always stand Lady Warwick. Steele was in the same trouble. We find him writing,

"DEAREST BEING ON EARTH, — Pardon me if you do not see me till eleven o'clock, having met a schoolfellow from India, by whom I am to be informed in things this night which extremely concern your obedient husband,

"RICHARD STEELE."

We hope for the sake of peace Lady Steele was asleep when he got home, and that he remembered to take his boots off before getting into bed; a bullying wife is apt to make a lying husband, and we do

not believe in the schoolfellow from India. Addison had to take so much drink to make him talk brilliantly — he could never speak in Parliament — that Steele was generally fuddled before Addison began; consequently, the suggestion about the boots is not out of place. Is it not wildly possible that Lady Warwick and Lady Steele might have kept their husbands at home by a different course of treatment, and not driven them to taverns for the sake of society, by simply assisting to entertain their husbands' friends at home, and listening to the best conversation of the century?

The play of the "Tender Husband" followed, and then the "Lying Lover." The latter play was unsuccessful; it is possible that Steele attended to Jeremy Collier's strictness too closely, for he is not only dull but preaches. Of this play he told a startled House of Commons years after, "It was damned for its piety."

The glorious, pious, and immortal memory of the great William might have been drunk potlles deep by Steele but for "the little gentleman in black velvet," who brought a sudden end to that monarch's career. The King's horse stumbled on a molehill, to the great satisfaction of some of the Tories, and to the great dissatisfaction of Defoe and Steele: Steele, however, was an Irishman, and managed, though entirely honest, to keep right side uppermost. A very singular thing is told which we should like to see verified; it is said that Steele's name was the last ever written down for preferment by William the Third, and that the fact was discovered after his death. The story has been told in various ways, but it seems to come from Steele himself, who on matters of this kind was no liar: it is in the highest degree probable, but is worth historically about the same as an *ex parte* state paper from Fetter Lane; that is to say, not worth the paper on which it is written.

He fared better than he expected: it is possible that Addison used his influence, now recognized, from his remarkable talents and blameless life, to get Steele appointed gazetteer; he was also made gentleman usher to the Prince Consort. He left the army and married; his income at this time is difficult to calculate. He had three hundred pounds a year as gazetteer, and something from other sources: his wife, who lived only a few months, had a property in Barbadoes, which he inherited: we, however, do not find his name on the list of estates on

that island forty years later, and it does not seem to be known among the traditions of that very aristocratic dependency. The lady having died suddenly, Steele very soon looked about for another helpmate, also with a little property. The second lady was Miss Scurlock, of Llangunnon, Carmarthen, heiress to four hundred pounds a year. *Veni, vidi, vici*, Richard Steele might have said of himself. He was then a handsome fellow of thirty-six, thirty-two, or thirty-one. Nobody seems to know, and therefore we do not pretend to decide. A Richard Steele was born in 1671. If that was the man, he was thirty-six in 1707, at which time he married Miss Scurlock, after a wonderfully short courtship. His statement of his income to her mother is as follows :

Barbadoes estate (let with negroes)	£ 850
Gazetteer office . . . . .	300
Gentleman usher . . . . .	100
	—
	1250
Deductions :	
Interest of £3000 debt . . . . .	180
Tax for employment . . . . .	45
	—
Remainder of income . . . . .	1025

Steele's marriage was for some reason private. Mrs. Steele married without her mother's consent, and awaited it until she would come to him by some process of reasoning which we confess ourselves unable to follow. He appears to have protested against it at first, but then as afterwards she appears to have made him do nearly as she chose. He writes to her still as Mistress Scurlock :

"MADAM, — Being very uneasy when absent from you, I desire you would give me leave to come to your house. Pray let Mrs. Warren be in the way to admit your obliged humble servant,

"RICHARD STEELE."

Ten days after this he is still asking for her mother's consent, and concealing the fact that they were married. He compliments his wife on her filial virtue in only consenting to come to his arms with her mother's blessing. It is very probable that Mrs. Steele's sudden accession of filial piety after marrying without her mother's leave had something to do with the old lady's power of administering the property: it is evident, however, that everything was soon comfortable as far as Mrs. Scurlock was concerned; and they shortly after started housekeeping on a scale which would have required

about double their income, had the income even existed, which it did not. Steele scarcely saw six hundred pounds cash in reality: he was certainly in debt when he married. During his mother-in-law's lifetime he only got from the Welsh estate what she chose to give him, and on this he and his wife started a style of living which would take nearly three thousand pounds a year now. His excuse was that it was necessary for him to keep up appearances. This laudable effort to advance his fortunes by display only gained him one eminent acquaintance, that is to say, the Sheriff of Middlesex: when he ultimately got out of debt, or nearly so, he died. He started with a town house; a country house at Hampton Court, near Lord Halifax; a carriage and pair, sometimes with four horses, a riding horse for Mrs. Steele, and everything else in proportion. Addison lent him a thousand pounds, which he, as we have said before, repaid; but nothing could keep such extravagance from continual trouble. Why Mrs. Steele allowed it is a question which is easily answered, she was not in possession of facts: Steele did not know the state of his own affairs, and believed in the most agreeable view of them; this he magnified and decorated to make himself agreeable to his wife, with whom he was utterly in love; she developed into a "screw," but can we, on the whole, blame the poor lady because she was not a Mrs. Micawber, and had not the charming habit which that lady had of believing with a splendid devotion in the financial ability of an entirely thriftless husband.

Starting almost at the very first, it becomes obvious from Steele's letters to his wife that he was in difficulties, and that she gradually had got the habit of facing facts, and of letting him know, sometimes with very little gentleness, that he was not (financially) the man she took him to be. She was devoted to him in the most proper manner, but her devotion took the form of such extreme anxiety about his well-being that the domestic hearth seems to have been warmed with something stronger than sea-coal; that is an elegant way of saying that she made the house too hot to hold him. No novelist, as far as we are aware, has as yet attempted to sketch the character of an invisible woman from the letters of her husband; it is highly probable that no person alive would be likely to succeed in giving the world a detailed character from almost purely one-sided

evidence, except George Eliot, who is capable of anything. The only attempt ever made in that way was by a Frenchman in the "Famille Benoiton." In that piece, the woman, who has been the ruin of the family by neglect, is never seen, and only heard of periodically by the fact that she is not at home. "*Où est Madame ?*" is asked continually. "*Elle est sortie,*" is the answer. At last, at the *dénouement*, when she might have been of some use, the question is asked, but is answered with a slight difference. Madame has been at home, but is once more gone out. Mrs. Steele, or Lady Steele, is practically as unreal a person as Madame Benoiton, she never appears. A parallel between her and the French lady holds only partially good, however: the author, whether of novel or play, who would sketch the relations between Steele and his wife, must draw on his imagination so far as to represent fact—a very difficult thing, only to be accomplished by a very first-rate hand. Our imaginary author would have to represent a perfectly doting husband, doting to imbecility, who is eternally making excuses for not coming home; and a wife who is continually wanting him to come home soon, and then making his home so excessively disagreeable that he is glad to get out of it again. The (we hope) imaginary wife of Albert Dürer was not more disagreeable at times than Lady Steele; it would take the pen of a Richter to describe her. Only a nagging woman is capable of driving an honest fellow like Steele into such mean subterfuges to avoid her company unless he could be assured of her temper. The woman was disappointed in her husband's finances; she on the whole behaved well, but hers was not a bosom on which he could lay his head, find peace, and start again diligent and newly strung for fresh effort; the encouragement he got was from his friends: Addison was Steele's wife. They quarrelled, it is true, and Steele was in the wrong; but Addison was the dearest friend which Steele ever had, and Steele's friendship for Addison outlasted everything.

Lord Macaulay, in one of his essays, declares that Steele never did any good without Addison's assistance. Surely there is a moral inaccuracy here; yet practically there is very much truth in it. Like many other of the critical bulls originally issued from Buccleugh Place, Edinburgh, N.B., it makes one angry until we see the partial truth contained

in it. Steele had no home, and he was partly lost without the guidance of his real better half, Addison; but to say that he was powerless without him is to speak inaccurately. Lord Macaulay desired to prove that Addison would, in a future state, sit at the head of all the Whigs in heaven, himself included; nobody ever doubted the fact except sinners and Tories; but in proving it Lord Macaulay goes a little out of his way in running down Steele. Steele had to write against time, with a wife continually demanding money; he did a vast number of things without any assistance from Addison at all; and he certainly as an originator beat Addison hollow. It is idle to say that we should have had Sir Roger de Coverley without Steele, though Addison has developed the character in its most tender and ornamental points; or that Steele's best papers could have been written with the dread of the invasion of a scolding woman into his study. Steele's home was not happy, and so his best papers were written at his office or at worse places. Lord Macaulay does not allow for a foolish woman or an unhappy home.

One fragment of a letter from Mrs. Steele to her husband is extremely sad. The poor lady and he had been quarrelling, and very likely he was in the wrong; the chances are about even that he was. She writes, "It is but an addition to our uneasiness to be at variance with one another. I beg your pardon if I have offended you. God forgive you for adding to the sorrow of a heavy heart. That is above all sorrow, but for your sake."

Ah, Mrs. Steele! half a dozen such letters as that, and your lover, who wrote to you as a lover to the end, would have been at your feet, not as a lover, but as a husband; you would never have had him write to you about "your rival A—s—n" (Addison). We may misjudge the woman, and we hope that we do; we can go no further with her. She had lived a peaceful life before she married him, possibly, though not a fine one. She had at first a grand time of it with her carriage, and then things went badly: she seems never to have exerted herself, and to have made her home uncomfortable, not through unkindness, but through simple petulance. That she could act bravely on what most women would consider a great matter there is no doubt. Steele confessed to her that he had an illegitimate daughter. She took the young lady into her house and treated her in a way which made her own chil-



dren jealous. To intending novelists we may mention that the young lady was lovely and accomplished; that Steele intended to marry her to Richard Savage, with a dowry of one thousand pounds (where the thousand pounds was to come from does not appear); that Steele, discovering the real character of Savage, broke off the arrangement; and the young lady married a tradesman below her and became a saintly person, while Richard Savage followed the path which he had chalked out for himself early in life, and went to the devil. If a young novelist cannot make a tale out of that, he or she had better quit the trade at once.

The "Tatler," one of the greatest English classics, is but rarely read now. Steele originated it, without the least idea that it was to live as long as the language is spoken. Addison, not long gone to Ireland, backed him up, certainly as early as the eighteenth paper. Steele says about Addison, "I was undone by my auxiliary. When I had once called him in I could not subsist without dependence on him." Addison wrote forty-one papers out of two hundred and seventy-one. Steele originated it, and also brought it to an end, in a way for which we are unable to account. It is certain that he made a great deal of money both by the original publication and the republication in volumes.

The "Spectator" followed at once; that collection of essays and stories, a large portion of which many of us have had to translate into Latin prose for about six years of our life. The sentiments are transcendent, the English prose absolutely incomparable; but whether for virtuous sentiment or admirable English, Addison reigns supreme, though Tickell, Steele, and Budgell run him hard at times. We doubt very much if the "Spectator" is greatly read now, save for the adventures of Sir Roger de Coverley and Will Honeycomb, both creations of Steele. We have just read the imitably witty and pathetic love story of Hilpa and Shalum, and it appears to us exactly the same as it was thirty years ago; the more often you read it the more the judgment of your early insight is confirmed. It has been translated into many languages, and those who say that it is the most outrageous piece of twaddling balderdash in the language are entirely wrong: there are many worse. The sentiments are of the most virtuous kind, absolutely faultless: the only ques-

tion which could possibly arise in a degraded mind is this: whether the young lady was worth all the trouble? To say that Hilpa had the remotest resemblance to Lady Warwick is to say more than we dare; yet the paper goes to the world with Addison's name, and the circumstances are not entirely dissimilar.

The "Spectator" was brought to a close in 1712. Addison published a supplementary volume in 1714 without Steele's help. Therefore the story of Hilpa and Shalum was written two years before his marriage with Lady Warwick. Steele meanwhile had started the "Guardian" in 1713, with a new set of characters and a new set of writers. Addison, as usual, came to his aid, and wrote forty-one papers to Steele's eighty-two, the rest, numbering forty-two, were written by the great Bishop Berkeley—who wrote fourteen—Alexander Pope, and John Gay, Philips, and Rowe: it is possible that no paper has ever had such a list of great classical names among its contributory before or since. This will hardly be disputed when we add to the names above mentioned those of Hughes, Budgell, Tickell, Parnell, Wotton, and Young ("Night Thoughts"). It seems incredible that such a paper should come to an abrupt end, but it most undoubtedly did so, and left Steele in a heavy quarrel with Swift. It was a very ugly thing to quarrel with Swift, and there is little good in raking it up. Steele charged Swift with being the "Examiner." Swift denied it to Addison, saying that he had saved Steele from ruin by his political power: Addison showed the letter to Steele: Steele wrote to Swift, laughing at his claim of having saved him: Swift's reply is grinding and terrible. He could be inexorably harsh, and was a master of a certain kind of fence; Steele was no match for him in the Dean's own peculiar manner. The Dean had a point, and that was that he had certainly pleaded for Steele to Harley; he made the most of this; but Steele knew, or thought he knew, that the Dean was lying hard about his connection with the Tory paper, the "Examiner." The Dean was this kind of man—a man rather uncommon, though there are a few in rather eminent positions even now: he loved power; he loved to hold a card in his hand against a man, and let him know that he held it. He held such a card against Steele, and thought that he should smash him by playing it. Steele *made* him play



it, and then laughed in his face, asking him what was the next card. There was no other. Steele, the soldier, the playwright, the Bohemian, stood simply on his own legs, and said, "Here am I, Richard Steele: *you*, Jonathan Swift, can't say or do anything against me which has not been said and done before: you have no more to say against me; I have my friends, you have yours; let us see who's the best man." Nothing in this world is so dangerous as driving an honest man, of good ability, with a wife to back him up, into a corner, Swift, wifeless, tried it, and Swift came out second best: but he never forgave Steele. The wretched man wrote envenomed personal attacks on Richard Steele, which Steele never could by any chance have read, and when he was quite happy. In the country once we heard one man say to an eminent author, "You caught it in the — last week." "Did I?" said the other. "As I never see that paper I do not particularly care."

One of the things which half ruined Steele for some time was the publication of the now celebrated "Guardian" on the demolition of the works at Dunkirk. The sentence which gave most offence was, "The British nation expects the immediate demolition of Dunkirk." This would be about equivalent to saying now, "The British nation expects that her Majesty will see the treaty with Russia carried out in its integrity." A most harmless sentence, but one which was thought by those who chose to think so, among others by Swift, to be a deadly insult to her Majesty. In this year he was elected to the borough of Stockbridge, at the nomination of the Duke of Newcastle; a petition was lodged against him for bribery but was never pursued; his enemies intended to inflict a much more serious blow on him than the mere loss of an election. He was duly elected in August, 1713, and took his seat the next March, having meanwhile written a very violent Whig pamphlet, "The Crisis," and three papers in the "Englishman," which contained some pretty strong reflections upon Queen Anne. His first parliamentary experience was the extremely unpleasant one of having to defend himself before the House on a charge of sedition. Robert Walpole spoke for him, as did also Walpole's brother, Horace, with Lords Lumley, Hinchinbroke, and Finch. Lord Finch had reason to speak in Steele's favour, for when his sister had been attacked by

the "Examiner" for knitting in church "in the immediate presence of God and the Queen" ("Write God first," says Dogberry), Steele somewhat savagely defended the lovely sinner, who was afterwards Duchess of Somerset. Young Lord Finch had never spoken before, and when he got on his legs he found that he could not say one word. "I can't speak for the man, but I'd fight for him," blundered out the honest young nobleman, sitting down. The House was so pleased with his modesty and pluck that they forced him on his legs again, on which Lord Finch suddenly found his tongue and astonished the House by a most capital speech. Steele, however, was expelled the House by a vote of 248 against 154. Hallam says that it was the first instance in which the House of Commons so identified itself with the executive administration independently of the sovereign's person as to consider itself libelled by those who impugned its measures. There is no appeal against Mr. Hallam, and so we are safe in writing down his account of the matter.

Steele now retired into private life, except as far as literature was concerned. He writes to his wife exhorting her not to be dismayed, and also that someone has paid in three thousand pounds to his account. He was but a short time under a cloud; Queen Anne died on the 1st of August, and the tables were completely turned.

"DEAR PRUE, — I have been loaded with compliments by the Regency. I am assured of something immediately. I desire you to send me a guinea. I shall have cash in the morning.

"RICH. STEELE."

The licence for Drury Lane Theatre having expired, it was renewed, Steele being patentee, and receiving about a thousand pounds a year from Colley Cibber and the other managers. He was made Surveyor of the Hampton Court Stables, a magistrate for Middlesex, and deputy-lieutenant. He was also elected to Parliament for Boroughbridge, and took Prue for a jaunt to York, when he went to his election, at which place she stayed, he going on to Boroughbridge alone, and promising her faithfully not to get drunk. But poor Prue was not long to remain Mrs. Steele: a grand banquet was given by the deputy-lieutenant of Middlesex to the lord-lieutenant, Lord Clare, and an address to the King was drawn up. Richard Steele; Esq., M.P.,

wrote it for them and became Sir Richard Steele, while poor honest Prue, for whom the close of all earthly honours and all earthly vexations was approaching, became her ladyship. The event was celebrated by a splendid banquet to two hundred persons with all kinds of wine. Addison wrote some lines of exquisite wit, which were spoken after dinner, and which gave the character of Steele in so perfect a manner that his history is complete: all Steele's projects and mistakes are touched on with a loving hand, and at last the guests are informed in confidence that their host intends to convert the Pope immediately.

Steele was, however, only moderately rewarded for his sufferings in the cause of party, which in reality had not been very great. Walpole sent him five hundred pounds as a present, and he must have made a tolerable sum by literature. The Rebellion of 1715 came on, and Steele became a commissioner of forfeited estates. About the end of August, 1716, Lady Steele left him with the children, while she went for about a year to her mother's at Carmarthen. There seems to have been no quarrel, but Steele seems to have been most beggarly poor for some reason: he writes, "We had not, when you left us, an inch of candle or a pound of coal in the house, but we do not want now." Steele's letters to his wife thus far are rather wearisome, for Lady Steele seems to have generally been in a bad humour, and once complains that he owes her eight hundred pounds, advising him to take care of his soul; he gives her the same advice and denies the debt. Old Mrs. Scurlock died, and there may have been some amelioration of their affairs; but Steele was bound to make his fortune to please his wife, and, in order to gain that end, threw a large sum of money in a plan for bringing fish to London alive. Salmon was then about five shillings a pound when it could be got in the Thames; the attempt was made to bring it from the Irish rivers, but the fish dashed themselves to pieces in the transit, and the thing was a failure: it shared the fate of his early efforts after the philosopher's stone.

Lady Steele, to whom we hope we have done justice, returned to him, and they seem to have been happy together. Steele had previously been in Edinburgh, where he had been well received. In 1718 we find him at Blenheim with the Duke of Marlborough; on the 20th of December, 1718, Lady Steele died, he

having, with all his faults of commission and omission, been as much a lover as a husband to her until the last. She was only forty when she died, he being about forty-eight: much as she may have had to undergo from her husband's carelessness in money matters, he never gave her one moment's uneasiness on the score of jealousy.

The loss of the woman he loved so dearly was quickly followed by the estrangement of the dearest friend he had ever known. Lord Sunderland introduced a bill limiting the number of the House of Peers, that is to say, preventing the creation of fresh peers by the sovereign for the purpose of carrying any political measure through the Upper House. Steele was furious at the measure, and published a paper called the "Plebeian," in which he argued that the limiting of the number of the peers gave them an almost overwhelming power, for they became an oligarchy almost under the power of the court, whereas, by giving the sovereign the power of creating a majority in their chamber, they were more dependent on the will of the nation as represented by the sovereign. He does not seem to notice the fact that the House of Lords exists only by the will of the sovereign that is, in reality, by the will of the ministry, for no nobleman can take his seat in the House of Lords without a call from the Crown. Addison took an entirely opposite view from Steele in the "Old Whig." The end was a quarrel, in which we think Steele, though he was right in his argument, was wrong in his conduct: he should have been more respectful to Addison. The bill was lost, and the privilege of the Crown remains; but it was a bitter victory for Steele, living as he did by the breath of the ministry. His persecution by the Duke of Newcastle, his loss of fortune, his quiet retirement to Carmarthen, where he forgot his quarrel with Dennis, with Addison — everything — in a quiet and peaceable end, our space gives us no room to narrate. At the end he had no enemies save Swift and Dennis. Vast sums of money for those times must have passed through his hands. Adams considers that the loss of his patent as Governor of the Comedians amounted to a fine of £10,000. In 1722 when his "Conscious Lovers" was acted the King sent him £500. Little seems to have remained. The early mass of debt was too overwhelming.

A good man, and a very clever one. He had one great blessing in life, the friend-

ship of Addison; he had one great misfortune, a posthumous reputation greater than his own. He lived with Addison, worked with Addison, and is always spoken of in comparison with him. Addison was so greatly his superior, that Richard Steele will suffer for all time by enforced comparison with a much grander man.

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From Macmillan's Magazine.

SPANISH LIFE AND CHARACTER IN THE INTERIOR, DURING THE SUMMER OF 1873.

#### LETTER IV.

THE position of the young unmarried women of the lower orders in Spain next claims our attention. Certainly the contrast between the perfect freedom of the daughter of the family in England, and the seclusion and strictness under which her Spanish sisters' days are passed, is a very striking feature in the domestic arrangements of the interior. In the lower walks of life the Spanish maiden is absolutely a prisoner—the prisoner of her madre, or her "tia," or aunt—until a kind Providence gives her a husband. No Spanish maiden, however poor, or however low her rank, can ever walk alone in the street, even for a few paces: if she do so her character is gone. She cannot go out to service unless her madre or tia be in the same service; and hence all the "criadas," or maid-servants, are widows who are allowed to have their children in their master's house, under their own eye; or unmarried over forty. The Spanish maiden has her choice of only two walks of life, until married life and a husband's protection becomes her own. Up to the time of her marriage she may either, if her father and mother be alive, go to a tailor's shop each day, returning at night, thus earning a few pence a day, and learning a trade. She is escorted thither and homewards by her mother, whose tottering steps and grey hair often contrast strangely with the upright carriage and stately walk of the daughter by her side. While at work during the day she is under the care of the "maestro," or master tailor, who sits among his bevy of fair maidens at the open door, and superintends their work. All the "tailoring" is done in this way. You first of all buy the amount of cloth you need at a linen-draper's; it is then taken to the tailor's house, and he takes your measure, and reports upon the

amount and fitness of the cloth, and sets his maidens to work. A good Spanish servant, if you get a tailor to cut the cloth, will thus, at odd hours, make a capital suit of clothes. If the Spanish maidens, however, have a mother who is a widow, or who has no settled home with her husband, and is for this cause obliged to go out to service to earn her bread, the maiden will probably be with her mother, and, receiving little or no wages, take an idle share in the household duties, and receive each evening—of course in her madre's presence—the visits of her lover. Most of these girls have their lovers, who, after his day's work is over, saunters idly, cigarillo in hand, into the kitchen which contains his Isidra, Maria, or Isabel—for these girls have very fine names—and performs his courting. The mother's watchful eye and ear are ever open, and the mother herself ever at hand. As to saying a single word, or, at least, having a walk or a good English "chat" *alone*, the young couple never even dream of such a thing. To so great an extent is this system of motherly surveillance carried, that should you call the mother away for a few minutes, she will not leave the young couple alone, but will order the young man to go out for some trifling article, or call the daughter to her side, that they may not have a private talk.

This seems strange, unnatural, and unneeded. The mother, during this period, treats her daughter quite like a child. If she does wrong—no matter though she be on the very eve of marriage—the mother administers a sound beating with her fists, and sometimes even a sound kicking. "Upon my word," said a pretty Spanish maiden thus situated, to me, "I really begin to think my mother is a bad old woman for beating me so." The Spanish mother has *no idea of trusting* her daughters; nor do they ever attempt the least religious or moral culture. Their system is to prevent any impropriety simply by external precautions. And I must say that the majority of poor girls, when led to the altar, would present a marked contrast in *purity* to an equal number of our English agricultural labourers' daughters. In Spain the daughter's purity is the mother's highest pride. Mother and daughter, though constantly quarrelling, and even coming to blows, are very fond of each other; and the old woman, when they go out shopping together, will carry the heavy basket, or cesta, under the

burning sun, that she may not spoil her daughter's queenly walk: her dull eye, too, will grow moist with a tear, and her worn face will kindle with absolute softness and sweetness if an English señor express admiration of her child's magnificent hair, or flashing black eyes. The poor old mother, too, will save and save: she will deny herself her morsel of "carne," or meat, and her little "copa" of wine, on feast-days (and these poor creatures' luxuries are few indeed at best) that she may buy a ring or ear-rings of gold, to grace her daughter at the "Feria," and shame her rivals.

The moment, however, that the daughter is married all this is at an end. The mother, to use a vulgar, but very expressive phrase, "washes her hands of" her care. From the moment of the completion of the marriage ceremony, the mother declines all responsibility, seldom goes to her daughter's house, and treats her almost as a stranger.

Among the higher classes, although different in kind, the treatment of the young unmarried maiden is almost as strict. She, too, like her humbler sister, can never have the privilege of seeing her lover in private, and very rarely indeed, if ever, is he admitted into the sala where she is sitting. He may contrive to get a few minutes' chat with her through the barred windows of her sala; but when a Spaniard leads his wife from the altar, he knows no more of her character, attainments, and disposition, than does the priest who marries them, and perhaps not so much. Happiness under such circumstances can hardly be expected as a rule, and yet the married life of the Spaniard, if not brilliantly happy, seems at least calmly peaceful. The pleasures of husband and wife lie in different directions, and each leaves the other free to follow out and enjoy them, as he or she best can. They are not much together again, and in sunny Spain there is no fireside gathering—indeed, there are no fire-places, only "braseros" of charcoal—to bring husband and wife together in sustained intercourse. There is a very striking law in Spain, the very existence of which proves better than any words of mine, the strictness with which the Spanish maiden is guarded, and the absolute authority of her parents. Its provisos are these: Should a Spanish lad and lassie become attached to one another, and the parents absolutely forbid the match, and refuse their daughter liberty and permission to marry, the

lover has his remedy at law. He has but to make a statement of the facts on paper, and deposit it, signed and attested, with the alcalde, or mayor of the township in which the lady's parents dwell. The alcalde then makes an order, giving the young man the right of free entry into the house in question within a certain number of days, for the purpose of wooing and carrying off his idol. The parents dare not interfere with the office of the alcalde, and the lady is taken to her lover's arms. From that moment he, and he alone, is bound to provide for her: by his own act and deed she has become his property. Cases have happened where the parents' judgment has been proved, by the bitter experience of their unhappy child, to have been the best: the would-be husband having turned out to be a seducer. But the law comes upon him with all its force, and he is bound to maintain her, in every way, as a wife, under pain of punishment. The whole Spanish law on the question of bastardy is very stringent, and bears severely—and deservedly so—on the man.

#### LETTER V.

IN seeking to present a general and impartial outline of Spanish life in the interior, I promised to give some estimate of the Spanish character. The first thing you will notice as a leading characteristic is its *exceeding passionateness*. Whether this may be due in any measure to the fiery sun of their climate or no, I cannot say. Many thoughtful men with whom I have conversed upon this subject believe that such is the case. But the fact remains. No race is so fiery as this. The rule with the Spaniards of the lower order is a word and a blow. It is, however, quite a mistake to suppose that the uneducated Spaniard is *vindictive* in nature—quite the reverse. His anger, soon up, is soon down again, and the insult under which he smarted forgotten, whether it has been avenged or no. The only safe way to deal with these men, when angry, is never to thwart, answer, argue with, or irritate them at the moment when their passion is boiling over. "Speak an angry Spaniard fair," and very soon his anger will calm down, and he will become a rational being again. More than this—he will be willing and glad to acknowledge his fault, and shake hands and be on friendly terms again.

A case in point here occurs to my mind. A friend of mine, while out rid-



ing, came suddenly, at a bend in the road, on two angry men, who were just in the act of drawing the knife upon one another. Contrary to the advice and entreaty of his companions, he sprang instantly from his horse, rushed in between them, separated, and expostulated with the combatants. The men, maddened with passion, deemed worthless and an interference his arguments and entreaties. At last one of them let fall the fact that they (the duellists) were brothers. Instantly my friend made use, and good use of this point. "Sirs," said he, "would you, who sucked the same mother's breast, go down to the grave, one of you with a brother's blood on your soul!" For a moment the men's better feelings were aroused; the younger brother drew back, and sheathed his knife. "Right you are, señor," he said, "badly, shamefully, as my elder brother has treated me, I have no right to draw upon him; he is my brother, after all — my elder brother." My friend took the young fellow's arm, and walking beside his horse led him slowly away from the scene of temptation. Homeward they went, talking about indifferent matters, until at last they reached the "casa" of my friend. On entering it, this man (the younger combatant) said, while the tears streamed down his brown wooden face, "You are *my friend*. Thanks to God I lie down to-night with hands not wet with my brother's blood." The men were miners, and of the lowest class of itinerant Spaniards.

Again — and possibly as a natural consequence of these frequent and deadly crimes, committed with the ever-ready knife — the Spaniard's utter disregard, utter recklessness about shedding man's blood, comes in here as another marked feature of Spanish character. The Spaniard thinks nothing at all of the higher and deeper aspects of his crime; he thinks nothing perhaps (I fear in too many cases it is so) because he has *been taught nothing* of the responsibility of sending his own soul or his neighbour's, without one moment's warning to its last account. True, he feels a certain remorse, and a certain terror of the law may cause him to tremble. But, if his crime be not found out, with the morning sun his remorse has passed away. The brother's blood has dried upon the knife, and he can cut and eat his melon with the self-same blade without a pang, perhaps without a thought. And this disregard of human life does not entirely con-

fine itself to the utterly ignorant classes. Like a vile infection, it spreads to those around. Two men, fighting in our streets, with revolver and knife, a few weeks since, both fell mortally wounded. Of course not one of the ring of bystanders had lifted a hand to prevent so ghastly a termination of what, in its commencement, had been but a trivial quarrel. The bystanders, I grieve to say, never do interfere. The two men were carried to the hospital; and on speaking to one of the chief officers of justice about the affair, "Yes," said he, lighting his cigarillo, one is dead, and the other, I fancy, *just walking on the border-land*." With these words he quietly dismissed the subject. Another case, illustrating what I have said, here occurs to me. I went into a way-side venta with a friend, a Spanish gentleman, for a glass of the common rough red wine of the country, the Val de Peñas. Two men, words running high between them, entered soon afterwards: one drew his knife, with an oath. The hostess did not cease filling the copas of her customers. My friend, a really humane and good man, merely uttered the single word "Knife!" and, drawing my arm through his own, dragged me out.

Noticeably in warfare long-continued — if we are to believe what has been written — the mind gets used to deeds of violence when so constantly presented to its view; and so, I suppose, it is in the case I allude to. But it is absolutely shocking to see how callous the lower classes have become to these swift, fierce deeds of blood.

"I wonder," said an educated man to me the other day, "how many men will be stabbed at the Feria *this* year?"

I think any comment of mine upon this speech would be wholly superfluous. There is one reflection that I cannot help making here — one question that constantly presents itself to my mind, when I see the fearfully low state of religious and moral culture to which the masses in this country have been suffered to become a prey — it is this, *Who is to blame for these things?* Here is a country with undreamed of mineral wealth; with vast resources of timber uncut and of land uncultivated; with vineyards to the full as rich as those of sunny France, and with a glowing climate; yet her poor have no education, and nothing but huts to live in; her roads are mere tracks, all trace of which the winter storms carry away; and, above all, not only mental, but religious culture is a stranger to the



masses; and who is to blame for these things?

The Spaniard, again, is a man *full of courage*. But it is courage of a certain and peculiar kind, and his courage is made up of paradoxes. He is reckless of his own life, and will fight with an adversary far his superior in skill. He is a daring horseman, and a still more daring driver. In the bull-ring, or personal combat, he shines for courage and adroitness; and yet, in some things, he is strangely timid. As a soldier, in the ranks, he has been proved not to be always very plucky, by the experience of past warfare. But I account for this upon this theory, that, being only semi-civilized, the Spaniard, like all semi-barbarians, cannot rely upon his comrades. These men do *not*, in trading or in fighting, loyally and fully *trust* one another. Then, again, the "presence" of a brave and yet unarmed man—his mere voice and presence—will awe two or three armed Spaniards. Again, in illness he is very timid; once the foe has fairly got him in its grip, the Spaniard gives up hope, and gives himself up to, as he calls it, "his fate."

So, then, his courage is made up of paradoxes, and I account for the fact in this way, that the nation is really only semi-civilized, and shares the characteristics of other semi-civilized peoples. Like them, the Spaniard knows no reliance on his comrades *en masse*; like them, he knows nothing of combination, as a secret of strength; like them, he has not the full and free and absolute trust in God as the Defender of the right.

Yet, as a soldier, the Spaniard's patience under privations is of no common order, and his exceeding endurance of hunger, thirst, and nakedness, would put to shame the endurance of an English infantryman.

I pass on to two bright spots in Spanish character—sobriety, and the politeness of all classes. The Spaniard, however ignorant, has naturally the manners and the refined feeling of a gentleman. A rude speech, a laugh at a foreigner's expense, would be voted simply indecent by him. Should an Englishman so far forget himself as to become "drunk and incapable" in a Spanish town, I believe he would be politely carried home and his purse restored to his pocket. The Spaniard, again, is *no drunkard*; as he himself says, "I know when I have had enough." Rare as may be his opportunities of getting stimulants, he would not

pass the bounds of moderation when the opportunity of drinking at another's expense is offered him.

Then the Spaniard, again, is *very contented*. Ask him why he does not ask more wages, and he would often say "It is too much trouble," but oftener still "I have enough." He is not certainly "a saving man;" on the contrary *most* improvident. He reads the motto "The morrow shall take thought for the things of itself" in its *wrong* sense, and he acts upon it.

In some other relations of life, the Spaniard of the lower class does not shine. In a country where the very bread, the very existence of two out of every three men depends solely on "his beast" one would expect to find many merciful men. But such is not the rule. The Spaniard never calls his mule or donkey by any pet name; he calls the one "Mulo" (mule), pronounced "Moo--lo!" and the other "Boricco" (donkey), pronounced "Bo--ruko!" You hear the ominous sound "Moolo," and, instantly following it, a shower of blows and kicks, too often wholly undeserved. A bad-tempered mule or donkey-driver will actually, if his beast be obstinate, seize its ear and bite until the blood streams down. This disregard of the sufferings of the rest of the creation seems to be sucked in with their mother's milk, for boys of seven and eight years old will stand at the corner of a street, where some poor donkey is tethered, and beat it mercilessly with an ashen staff, wielded with both hands, the passers-by never dreaming of interfering the while! So with the dog: he is beaten, not to correct and amend his faults, but simply to avenge, the fault he has been guilty of.

The one pleasure, amounting to a passion, of all classes in this country is *gambling* of every sort. In the street, the cottage, the casino, the fair, are lotteries, pitch-farthing, cards, roulette-tables, and every sort of gaming, to be found.

So let me end. Passionate, but rarely revengeful; careless of others' lives, yet equally so of his own; more enduring and contented than courageous, as a soldier; very generous of what he has; sober, but not very chaste; polite and kind, but not very truthful; cruel, and yet withal warm-hearted; not patriotic, yet very fond of his country; proud, and yet ready to serve and help,—the Spaniard has many noble qualities. But he needs education of heart and mind, moral as well as men-

tal culture. That given him in greater abundance, he would be a noble friend and a by no means contemptible foe.

#### LETTER VI.

I MUST endeavour to bring to a close my chapter on the general view of Spanish life and character in the interior. I have sought to bring out vividly and impartially a true picture of Spanish life and manners, and to describe the state of some of these townships of the interior as it really is. I have taken you from the poor to the well-to-do: from the town to the country: from troubles to peacefulness. Let me gather up some details that still remain to make my picture as clear as I can.

Let me premise, that it is almost with a feeling of sadness—at any rate, of depression—that I begin these chapters; for in them, to be truthful, I must give rather a gloomy background to the many bright traits in the character of these people, the reproduction of which has given me sincere pleasure. It may be that, like the Spaniard himself, one is too prone, under these bright and cloudless skies,—where day after day reproduces itself only more bright and yet more bright than the last—to dwell upon the bright side, and forget what is equally true, yet far from bright or encouraging.

But as our home poet has said, with touching simplicity,—

Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn;

and one must walk at times through the shadow, and be content to grasp the thorn.

I have not sufficiently dwelt upon the low, the very low state of morals among the higher classes; and the ignorance, the rudeness, the semi-civilized state of the masses. Let me speak of the latter first, for with *them* I am most at home. Ill-fed, ill-housed, ill-clothed, ill-taught, or rather *untaught*, and uncared for: a hopeless, objectless being, feeling no responsibility for the present or the future. Such is the peasant of the interior, be he farm labourer, blacksmith, fruit-seller, water-carrier, gipsy, horse-dealer, or what he may. He seems to be unable to read, or write, or think, or love, or hope, or pray, or plan. With him there is no light. Into darkness, social, moral, religious, and intellectual, he is born as his heritage; in that darkness he spends, and in that darkness he is content to end his

days. Come with me for a stroll—although *unarmed* a stroll is by no means a secure pleasure—into the campo, or wild country, and visit the hut of a friend of mine, a poor fruit-seller, and we will pass a few hours of one day with him. His little shanty stands alone near his dry, half-tilled garden; and you look in vain for a smiling village, or a substantial farm, or country-house. His hut, let us call it “shanty,” stands alone amid the thistles, its poverty its best protection. It is formed of three walls of rude, unfashioned, unhewn stone, bound together with no mortar. You must stoop low to enter it; it is roofed with reeds from the Guadalquivir, or with brushwood from the steepes of the Sierra; its door is a hurdle, laced with green brushwood and rushes, from the neighbouring bosque (coppice). There is one rough settle in the dark room, and on it lie the two “mantas,” the use of which I explained in a former letter. The floor is the earth and dust. Here is the mistress, a knife stuck in her girdle. You must not look for beauty, or tidiness, in her wooden, mahogany-coloured face; and you wonder at her stride, like a man’s, and her muscled arms, and rough voice. Yet remember, she has to work very hard; and the Spanish old woman (*madre*) of the lower class is always a masculine-looking hag. She has no chair, but courteously apologizes for its absence, and throws down a “manta” on the floor for you to sit on. Suddenly, you hear at your ear the cackling of hens, the crowing of a cock; she sees, with ready Spanish perception, that you are puzzled, and pushes aside, not the bed linen, but the brushwood, and there, under the settle, is the “roost” full of poultry! There, too, is her little jarra of water, “agua clara,” and the provisions for the scanty “comla” (we drop the *d* in “comida” in the interior)—the flat cake of coarse bread, and the melon, or the white grapes. She will tell you with a woman’s tact (though it is not perhaps strictly true), “We are all in the rough, for the winter rains are coming, and then we go to take a house” (*she means a quarter of a room*) “in the town.” The little vineyard, or melon, or vegetable ground of this man is close to his house, and daily he takes his produce to the Plaza (market-square) of the adjoining towns. Just now he is taking his siesta, rolled in his manta in this room, too indolent to move. At sun-down he trots behind his donkey, with its panniered sides

well galled with "melones" or grapes; and we will follow him along the dusty track—we boast no roads—with his baggy canvas trousers, esparto-grass sandals, and huge knife stuck in his faja. About ten o'clock he arrives in the street, which, running out of the market, serves for stables for the beasts, and bedroom for the owners of these panniers of fruit. He loosens his pannier from his donkey's back, and lets the air get to the inside of the packet of fruit; then, tethers his donkey to the side of the street, rolls himself up in his manta, lights his cigarillo, and falls fast asleep by his fruit. It is a strange sight to pass about midnight along these streets adjoining the fruit market,—the rows of donkeys, the hundreds of sleeping forms, undistinguishable from the fruit and sacking, the fresh sickly damp smell of fruit hanging heavy on the air; and just beyond the Plaza, with its every tent now lying on the ground covering the fruit, and a tiny oil lamp burning faintly to show where the stall and the stall-keeper and the fruit are, all lying under the rough tent like a lot of half-empty sacks.

At 3.30 the market opens, and at four to five it is, in truth, a lively sight; from every house in the town comes a representative; and from every rich house a criada, her basket on her arm, to buy fruit, bread, and game (for there is little beef or mutton killed in the summer months) for the day's consumption. The little tents of the fruit venders are of the most primitive and varied shapes, dirty canvas stuck in fantastic shapes upon one or more sticks; underneath their shade lie the heaps of glowing fruit, the red flame-coloured tomato, the red and yellow pomegranate, the purple fig, the yellow or dark-green melon, the plum, the apple, and the grape, all in profuse abundance, all sold at the uniform rate of five farthings the pound!

The rich colours of the fruit, the chattering of those that buy and sell, the gaudy colours of dress of the people, with the tinkling of hundreds of mule and donkey bells, and the shouts of the muleteers, who can hardly pick their way through the eager throng, all together forms a scene for an artist's pencil. I strolled down one day at five o'clock, when a column, 2,000 strong, of General Pavia's army had entered the town on the night preceding, and the Plaza was thronged, and stripped of all its luscious stores; but I shall never forget the sight: the uniforms of the soldiery, their shoeless

sandalled feet, the bright fruit, and the fierce competition for it, in the early morning sunlight, formed a scene at once busy and beautiful.

Sunday, alas! though the "Domingo" (Lord's day), is the busiest day of all. Sunday, which brings rest to the tired millions in our own land, brings none to these. True, the bells are clashing and clanging all the day, but save a few pious or frightened women, in many of these towns there is no congregation at all. On Sunday bricklayers build, carpenters mend, and shops drive a roaring trade. To a certain but *very small* extent, the "feast days" make up for the Sunday's rest. Thus, a devout man will say to his employers, "To-day is the festival of the saint after whom I was christened," and his holiday will at once be granted to him, and to some of his chief friends. Then, he can pray or confess in the morning, and have a feast in the afternoon.

Now for the closing scene in the life of the Spanish poor. Ill health and old age must come at last, and bread cannot be won any longer. He has no work-house or "parish pay" to look to, and so he must either beg his bread from door to door, as do many, or live on the grudging charity of relatives; or, as is often the case, he must be content, for the term that remains to him, to be a "dependent" of the master for whom he once worked, or of some charitable rich man. These masters, in the larger houses and "palacios" of the towns, are very kind to their old servants: at eight or nine o'clock, you will be surprised by observing crowds of these poor, worn, ragged creatures sitting inside the court-yard, and round the outer doors of some of the great ones, waiting for alms and food. Often I have been thus most forcibly reminded of the Parable of the Great Teacher, framed on this spectacle. Like the certain poor man, of whom he spoke, they are laid at the rich man's gate; like him, too, they desire only to eat of the crumbs which fall from his abundant table; there, too, you may often see the dogs—great, rough hounds kept for guards—passing up and down the string of sitting suppliants, and greeting with a lick or a kiss some old acquaintance!

Such, to its end, is the Spanish peasant's life. And is not the picture all too dull? No joys of education while away his time. I have never yet seen above three books read in the market, and they were hardly decent! No cottage home and peaceful village is his, where his

weakening eyes may see his sons and daughters growing up around him. Hard, coarse fare, and hard lodging—this, without one ray of religious hope and light to lighten his darkness—is his hard and bitter lot.

Would you follow him one step further? There is a little, walled-in spot of sandy, rocky ground, some two miles outside the town from which I write—it is the cimiterio, where at last his bones are laid in peace, waiting for the touch of that Magic Wand which one day is to make all things new. I entered that sacred ground, a few nights since, for the first time. Much as I had heard of the beauty of burial-yards abroad, I looked at least for decency and cleanliness. The first thing that struck me as I opened the gate, and took off my hat, was the sickly, putrid smell that well-nigh caused me to vomit. Close before me, on a rough-hewn and unlettered stone, stood two tiny coffins; the lids (always of glass) were not screwed down. I pushed one aside, and there, beautiful even in death, were the rich tresses and pink cheeks of a child of some eight summers. The other was the coffin of an infant. Both bodies were wrapped, as is customary here, in coloured silver-paper—for the clothes are *burnt* invariably, as they might be a temptation to some dishonest person to exhume the coffin from its shallow grave. Just then I looked down, and lo! the whole place was covered with human bones, lying on the surface. The evening breeze rose and fell, coming from the distant Sierra Morena, and wafted to my feet—it *clung around* my feet—a light, loose mass of long and tangled hair. Stooping down to look, I saw that there was plenty of it about; on the grave-stones, and around the dry thistles, which grew in abundance, it twined and clung. There was no grass, no turf—only sand, and rocks peeping out. This, then, was the end of life's brief drama here: the rude end of a still ruder life! I saw no tombstones worthy of the name. I asked the old grave-digger, when would he bury the two little coffins? "Manaña" (tomorrow), he answered; "but the place is so full, I hardly know where to scrape a hole."

Just then, I heard the strains of martial music coming near. A civil funeral came, heralded by its band; and as the shades of evening fell, one more coffin was deposited on the rude blocks of stone, to wait until the morrow's dawn.

From Chambers' Journal.

## TO MARRY AGAIN OR NOT.

No man ever had a fonder or better wife. I say so now, with as full conviction as I said it when I looked my last in her dear dead face, and kissed it and the fingers that had wrought so deftly and untiringly for the poor, for our children, and for me. I am a hale, active man of seventy, and, through God's mercy, capable of much enjoyment; but a day and night pass not without thoughts of how well she suited me, how simply she admired me, how tenderly she loved me, what a happy old couple we should have been.

"I wonder you never married again, Morton," said my early friend, Jack Hathaway, to me once. "You must have wanted a wife in the parish as well as at home, and you must feel very lonely in the long winter evenings."

Then I knew that he was thinking lovingly of his fat little wife and commonplace children at home, and I was glad of it, for he is a good creature, and though we are intellectually antagonistic, and he sometimes offends my taste, I like him because we were lads together. I felt that I must say something, and I am sure I astonished myself more than I astonished him when I said: "To tell you the truth, Jack, I did think of it once."

I was so taken aback by the having made such a confidence—I had never breathed the fact—had intended never to breathe it—that I felt as I think I should feel if one of my good sound front teeth fell out, and I had to attack a piece of coal.

"Then what hindered you?"

"Well, to be candid—postage-stamps."

"Postage-stamps?" he queried loudly.

"It is a curious story," I answered. "I will tell you all about it, if you really feel interested, but I would rather not have it repeated."

"I am as deep as a well, and of course I'm interested."

With that he crossed his legs, leaned back in his chair, and looked expectant.

I began: "You know that I was left a widower with two children, a boy and a girl. They went to school as soon as they were old enough. About sending a boy, there can be, in my opinion, no doubt; and I do not believe that a solitary girl can be educated, with advantage to herself, at home. She requires companionship, wishes for it, and ought to have it. I even took care to provide it for mine in her holidays. My wife had

always taken great interest in the Daltons. Dalton was the perpetual curate of Furzeham, about four miles off, and he had married a favourite schoolfellow of hers. It was an imprudent match; neither of them had any money; of course they had a large family, and Furzeham was worth £120 per annum. Mary helped them a great deal, and, 'You'll be kind to the poor Daltons—won't you?' was among her latest expressions. Their oldest daughter was two years older than ours, and ten years wiser. Education, as it is usually understood, she had none: it was simply impossible: first, there was no money for it; next, her mother wanted her to help in nursing, sewing, cooking, housework. I must say the child was a strong case in favour of no education. She had abundance of talent; and her father being a gentleman, her mother a gentlewoman, she acquired easy, self-unconscious manners, talked with tact, read aloud charmingly, wrote a capital letter—she even danced and sang when she had opportunity. Now, partly for her sake, to give her the recreation she deserved, and a glimpse of better social things than existed at home, but much more for my own girl's sake, I always had Dorothy Dalton to spend her vacation with her, and I treated her in every respect as another daughter, even to kissing her and blessing her night and morning. It went on thus six or seven years, till Anna married, which she did at eighteen. Dorothy had been invaluable during the troublesome period of preparation for the wedding; and when it was over, I asked her mother to leave her with me for a time, not only to set new arrangements going, but to talk to me; for Charles, who was with me for the long vacation, was very dull, a mere bookworm. Mrs. Dalton agreed; and for several weeks all went on delightfully. Dorothy had an exquisite gift of companionship—could set conversation going when it was wanted, and her silence was never glum or oppressive. As far as I am concerned, this state of things might have lasted to the present day—I should never have dreamed of putting an end to it—but one morning I was alarmed by a visit from Mrs. Dalton—I say alarmed, not only because her countenance betokened trouble, but because I knew that it was barely possible for her to leave her family. My first thought was of some pecuniary difficulty; not that she or Dalton had ever asked for even a small loan—yet how could they make both ends meet? Her

first words were: 'I want to speak to you alone.'

"So you shall," I replied. "Now, my dear good friend, what's the matter? Nothing serious, I hope?"

"No," she said faintly, and with a quivering lip, not looking up at me; "but I want Dorothy to come home with me to-day."

"Why?" I asked. "Is Dalton ill, or one of the children, or are you? What is it?"

"She broke into quiet tears; and knowing the woman's long endurance, her strength as well as tenderness of character, I was very much affected."

"Come, come," I said soothingly; "remember what an old friend I am. Try and fancy that I am Mary," I whispered, and I took and kissed her roughened hand spoiled for society, but in my eyes made venerable by holy household toil.

"She wiped her tears, and said: 'We have all forgotten that Dorothy is now a woman. We ought not to have allowed her to stay with you after Anna went away. People are making ill-natured remarks.'

"Then I felt exceedingly angry, and said: 'I really think that my age and social position entitle me to have a young lady staying in my house as long as she and her parents choose, even if she had not, as Dorothy has, grown up as one of my own family. How did you hear this gossip?'

"In the most innocent, unexpected manner, from my dear little Mattie. She went to Miss King's to buy me some cotton. The Browns, who were in the shop, did not see her, and made observations, which she repeated, and asked me to explain."

"I should have liked to know what the observations were, but I checked myself, and enquired: 'Do you believe that this sort of thing is worth noticing? To me, it seems utterly contemptible.'

"No, it is not," she answered firmly: "society has made rules, and they are useful, and we must abide by them. I will take Dorothy back, if you please; and I am sure you understand"—her voice faltered—"how much I like, and have always liked, her to be here. You are a second father to her."

"You won't tell her?"

"O no; there is no occasion. It is simply true that I am very much in want of her help at home."

"Then I reproached myself for having been selfish in keeping her so long; and



she came in, radiant and affectionate, and I felt that a sort of void was made in my life, which I knew not how to fill. I drove slowly back, after leaving them at Furze-ham, and stopped to give an order at the saddler's. While I was there, these words caught my ear: 'Will she take the old one or the young one, think ye?'

"I could not see the speaker; I did not know the voice, but, at the moment, the words seemed to have an unpleasant significance, though probably they had no reference to me."

"Things do occur very oddly," interpolated Jack. "They might have alluded to something quite different. Circumstances seem sometimes to be tinged by what is uppermost in the mind. The man might have been talking of horses or cows that he had to sell. Had you any notion that your son admired Miss Dalton?"

"None whatever. He was at that time very backward socially — devoted to hard reading, and if he spoke of women at all, it was to depreciate them intellectually. I should have been hard on him for it, but that he could not remember his mother; and Anna, dear creature, is not clever —"

"She is none the worse for that, in my opinion," interrupted Jack. "As a rule, clever women do not add to home happiness, which is the chief end for which they are sent into this world."

It was useless to answer this, though it irritated me: he had always taken a low tone, or he could not have married the insipid little woman whose twaddle was quite up to his mark.

"But go on, James," he continued; "I want to get at the postage-stamps. I think, by the way, that Mrs. Dalton was right to take her daughter home. Unless people hereabouts are simpler or more good-natured than they are elsewhere, they would infallibly say that her parents were trying to catch you or your son for her."

I winced again, and said: "You may be right; but as I have never troubled myself about gossip — possibly because I had never been affected by it — I thought it very hard at the time. There was I, deprived of the harmless, pleasant fitting of a girl about my quiet house; and she was removed from surroundings that suited her to a very meagre home —"

"Where she must have been very much wanted by her mother," interrupted Jack. "The fact is, James, that I suspect you

were, quite unconsciously, in love with the young lady."

"No!" replied I, stoutly; "of that I am quite certain; but I admit that after I had thought over the matter some weeks, I asked myself why I should not marry her, if her parents would give her to me willingly, and if she thought she could be happy with me. That, in a way, she loved me, I was as sure as that I loved her — not with a lover's love — that was as impossible for me as second-sight, but with affectionate approbation, cordial admiration, genuine pleasure in her society. I could take her from poverty to affluence, and, when I died, leave her independent."

"What prospect has a poor parson's daughter? He can leave her nothing. If, by some painful process, he contrives to educate her — as it is called — to make a governess of her, what a life is before her! I declare I think a girl had better marry any kind, good man who loves her, than teach, teach, teach; conflict with the old Adam in children day after day, year after year; having no freedom of action, no home the while, till she is too old for it; and, after helping her family, has perhaps saved what gives her twenty or thirty pounds per annum, on which to languish and die. Dorothy, moreover, could only be fit for a very inferior situation; she had bright parts, but no systematic training. What was to become of her, her mother, and sisters, when Dalton died? She might — with her attractions, she probably would, come across more than one man who would be fond of her, but could not marry without money. Of what use would that be? After discussing the matter with myself a month, I wrote her a letter, of which I remember every word — ay, even the position of the sentences. I told her that, though not with a young man's love, not with the sacred love I had given my wife, I loved her; that I would rejoice in her presence, would shield her as far as I could from the ills of life, till my death, and after it, would advance her brothers' and sisters' interests, make her mother's life easier. I told her to take her own time to consider and to consult her parents. I wrote late one night, and next morning the letter seemed to me too important for my own post-bag. I was not afraid that the servants or post-office people would think it odd that I wrote to her, for I had often done that; but I resolved to take the letter myself, and post it at Crossford. The postmaster there had married a parish-  
oner of mine: she would be glad to see

me: the walk was a pleasant one, and I was in a frame of mind which demanded quick motion. I stepped out cheerily, that bright September morning, wondering, among other wonderings, whether Dorothy and I should ever walk that way as man and wife —"

"Now," interrupted Jack, "I suppose we are coming to the postage-stamps."

"We *are*," said I, "but we must come at them my own way. The post-office at Crossford was a grocer's shop. The mistress, my friend, Mrs. Sims, was, as I expected, pleased with my visit."

"Such a pleasure, *to* be sure, sir, and you looking so well—"fresh as a four-year-old," as my good-man do say of you, sir, special.—Yes, he's nicely, sir; thank you—gone to Boxham market to look about some pigs. There's a fine new sort, they do say, that Sir William have brought into the county, from Shropshire. You'll come into the parlour, sir, and sit down. You may well look at all them letters. I couldn't say how many has been for stamps this morning; and I hadn't one till half-an-hour agone. Master Charley, too, he have been for some. They left their letters, and I said I'd see to stamping them, and that I will, *sure'y*."

"I'll do it for you," said I. "I see you want to put away these goods; and it will amuse me while I talk to you."

"So, notwithstanding resistance on her part, I began. I daresay there were between thirty and forty of them, and I was getting rather tired when I came to the last. I had really not looked at the addresses of the others. I could not have told where one of them was going; but this one —"

"Was to Miss Dalton, from your son!" exclaimed Jack.

"It was indeed," I replied; "and I cannot attempt to describe my feelings. I believe that I was for some seconds unconscious; the ground seemed gone from under my feet. My own son was deceiving me; and I could not conjecture how far Dorothy was involved. The one miserable consolation was, that my own letter remained safe in my pocket. I was not committed. I conclude that my countenance had changed, for when I rose to go, as I did immediately, Mrs. Sims entreated me to have some brandy, saying she was sure that 'the smell of the nasty dips had upset me; but what could she do? People must live, and she must sell what there was a demand for.'"

"You need not be told with what diff-

ferent feelings I walked home; the entire aspect of life was changed for me. Dorothy was irretrievably lost, and hanging over me was the disagreeable necessity for an explanation with Charles. As far as my observation reached, he had not only shewn no preference for Dorothy, but paid her less attention than, in my opinion, she had a right to expect from him. It annoyed me exceedingly to become aware that I was an utter stranger to my son's inner life; I thought him more than usually silent at dinner, but then I was constrained and heavy-hearted. As soon as the servant was gone, I said: 'Pray, Charles, do you consider me an inquisitive man?'

"Certainly not," he replied. 'No man less so, I should say.'

"Have I ever," I demanded, 'shewn any distrust of you, or any disposition to hamper you by unnecessary exercise of parental authority?'

"He looked amazed, and answered: 'No, sir; I have always felt, when comparing my position with other men's, that I was singularly fortunate in my father.'

"That's well. I have the less difficulty, then, in putting a question to you. What's the meaning of a letter addressed by you to Dorothy, which, without blame being due to anybody, I saw this morning at Crossford post-office?'

"Surprise, displeasure, and a sort of doggedness, were in the countenance; he turned away from me, and some seconds—they seemed to me minutes—passed before he said: 'It would never have occurred to me that there was anything out of the way in my writing to her; we have been brought up like brother and sister.'

"But why walk six miles to post your letter? I should not have thought anything about seeing a letter from you to Dorothy on the table or in the bag, though I should have reminded you that you could not correspond with her with propriety. You might, of course, have written a casual note to her about a book, or some arrangement.'

"Why infer," he asked, 'that the letter you have seen was not one of this character?'

"In the first place," I replied, 'because you took the trouble to post it where it was in the highest degree improbable that I should see it; and lastly, from your evasions.'

"Then there was a long pause, and I thought he was determined not to speak."

"Charles," I said sternly, 'Dorothy

has been so much among us, that I am responsible for whatever, involving her happiness or misery, is connected with any of us. As your father, and in place of her father, I demand what relation exists between you and her which leads to your writing to her clandestinely. If I cannot elicit it from you, I shall have an immediate explanation with her.'

"He looked badgered, ill-tempered even, and said hurriedly and surlily: 'I wrote to Dorothy to ask her to marry me some day.'

"'Asked her to marry you!' I exclaimed. 'I put aside your gross disrespect in ignoring me in so important a matter, and remind you that you have not taken your degree, that you are wholly dependent on me, and that, during my lifetime, unless I assist you, you will, in all probability, have nothing better than a country curacy.'

"'I suppose it was not unnatural to expect that you would help me, sir, as you are very fond of Dora.'

"This he said in a tone which softened me a little. After all, thought I, he is very young. 'Pray, what answer do you expect from her?' I inquired. I was relieved to find that she was innocent of aught that would have lowered her in my eyes. She was lost to me forever, whether she accepted Charles or not, but she was worthy the place I had given her in my heart, and would have given her in my house. Without giving him time to reply, I went on: 'I have too good an opinion of her to believe that she will answer you without consulting her mother.'

"'I begged her to say nothing to any one.'

"'Then either,' I rejoined, 'you are more ignorant of the world than I believed even a reading-man could be, or you have endeavored consciously to lead her to act as a modest girl should not. Pray, what reason did you give for such a request?'

"'This: that, in the event of her taking me, some years must elapse before I could marry; and I should dislike being pointed at as an engaged man all that time; and that if she refused me, it was no business of any one else.'

"His cool selfishness exasperated me. I got up and walked about the room. 'Good heavens!' I ejaculated; 'and you are a very young man, and my son.'

"'Of course, I did not put it quite so broadly as that,' he observed, rather apologetically; 'but you expect confi-

dence, and I am not a man of many words. I really took pains to write a proper letter, and I think I succeeded. I always had a notion that I should never marry. A college life has been my object since I was old enough to have one, and, as a rule, I find women a bore; but Dorothy is different from all the women I know—suits me, in fact. I thought I should like to make sure of her, and would not mind waiting for her. You see, it could all go on quietly enough. I should see her here a great deal.'

"I set my son down as utterly abnormal, and I think I disliked him for a minute, but I remembered his poor mother's loving pride in him as a little child, and relented.

"'Have you any reason for expecting that Dorothy will accept you?' I inquired.

"He leaned back comfortably, put his hands in his pockets, and said: 'Not exactly; but I do not see why she should not; she is very fond of us all. At any rate, I will let you know as soon as I get an answer.'

"With that he seemed to consider the conference over, and that he was at liberty to leave the room. I was glad when he was gone. I puzzled myself very much as to how Dorothy would act—not as to whether she would accept Charles—it never occurred to me to discuss that with myself. Would she tell her mother? Undeniably, she would wish to do so, for she was openness itself; but she would be unwilling to annoy Charles, because he was my son, if for no other reason. Would she write to me? or would her father or mother write? Unless they sent a special messenger—and they guarded conscientiously against needless small expenses—there could be no letter till the third day. In the interval, there was no perceptible change in Charles's ways, except that he was constrained when we were alone. I imagined that he feared I should renew the subject, but I was not at all inclined to do that. I had discovered a great gulf, unsuspected before, between my first-born and myself. My life was placed in a new groove, and did not—perhaps never would—run easily in it, and that odious gossip had given the first impetus. I believe my hands trembled a little when I unlocked the post-bag on that third morning. There was no letter for Charles, but a note from Mrs. Dalton, asking me to call as soon as I could. I gave it to him without a remark. He put it in his

pocket, and did not read it in the room. Soon after breakfast I walked to Furze-ham. Dora came to me in the little study, and again I felt how changed I was. Up to that time, we had held out both hands mutually and simultaneously, and I had kissed her as heartily and naturally as if she had been Anna: now, my own secret consciousness made that impossible, and the something unexpressed by me, or something which I did not fathom in her, held her back.

"Colouring, and looking distressed, she gave me one hand, saying: 'It was very good of you to come so soon, but I thought you would.'

"I made an effort to be playful, and rejoined: 'You know I have utterly spoiled you, kitten!'

"The smile this evoked was a poor pitiful spectre.

"'Come,' I went on; 'I know why you sent for me, so you need not worry yourself about how to begin. Charles has told me.'

"'Oh! I am so glad. But why did he not do so before he wrote to me? It would have saved me great unhappiness. I did not know if I ought not to have kept his secret, though I should have felt quite guilty hiding anything, especially such a thing, from mamma; but I could not. The letter was taken to her, and, of course, she has always opened and read my letters as if they were her own.'

"'Quite right: the longer she does so the better. Charles had no right to make such a request. I am surprised that he did not know better.'

"'But I am sorry to have done anything disagreeable to any of you. I am so fond of Anna; and you have always, *always* been so kind to me.'

"'There is no harm whatever done, Dorothy: circumstances helped you out of a difficulty, as they often do help the innocent.'

"Then we were both silent. I saw she wanted to go on, but did not know how; and, for myself, I had a sort of fear of what I should hear — but I helped her.

"'Well, Pussy,' I asked, 'what are you going to say to Charles?'

"'I do not know;' and she looked miserable.

"'I have always thought you were very clear in your views, and distinct in stating them.'

"'Yes; I know my own mind quite well; but —' She stopped, and seemed about to cry. 'I do not know what to do,' she went on.

"'Do you mean that you do not know whether you like Charles well enough to accept him or not?'

"'O no; but there are so many difficulties.' This was said hardly above her breath.

"'Do you mean the long engagement, and so on?'

"She blushed with vexation, and answered: 'O dear! no. But I am so afraid of hurting your feelings, or displeasing you. I do so wish it had never happened.'

"'But, my dear child, what could there be displeasing to me, or injurious to my feelings, in your being attached to my son? I think it would be an indirect compliment to me.'

"She hardly let me finish, but spoke very earnestly.

"'Did you ever think that I — No; you never can have supposed that; you must have been as much surprised as I was. If anything of that kind had been going on, I must have been the most deceitful creature possible; but I am afraid of your thinking that Charles would not have asked me, if I had not encouraged him. I am sure I should say so of any one in my circumstances. I hope the lesson will make me very charitable. I have really never thought about Charles at all. It no more entered my head that he thought about me in that way, than that you did.'

"I winced. She had been speaking so fast that I could not get in a word. I was sitting in what they called humourously her father's easy-chair; she was opposite, on a low seat, leaning forward, with her little hands clasped in her lap, her pretty warm brunette complexion heightened, her eyes sparkling, her countenance expressing what she was trying to put in words.

"'Dorothy,' I said, 'you will grieve me very much, if you imagine for one moment that it would be possible for me to doubt your candour. I am sure you were as much surprised as I was. To tell you the truth, my dear little girl, I never gave Charles credit for so much good taste, and it had never even entered my head to think of his marrying at all.'

"She looked, however, only partially relieved when she returned: 'I am glad you understand me — I hope you always will.'

"'And is that all you have to say to me, Dora?'

"'No; I want to know what I am to do?'

"That must depend entirely on your own feelings. I am quite as anxious for your happiness as for my own children's. Do you love Charley?" She only replied by tears; and I began to consider if she had a secret fondness for him, and thought I might object to her want of money, so I went on: 'If you do, I consider him the luckiest fellow in the world, for, though he is my own boy, he is not worthy of you.'

"I will tell you all," she said, wiping her eyes. 'I do not love him; I am sure I never should love him well enough to marry him; but I do not like to say so to you; it seems so ungracious.'

"In the depth of the meanness hidden in my heart, I was delighted that she had spoken thus of my own son, but I smothered the feeling, and walked to the window to look out.

"I am afraid you think me ungrateful," she resumed.

"That would be utterly unreasonable. No one can command his heart."

"You see that I do not think I could make Charles happy if I married him without loving him, and it could not be right either — could it?"

"Certainly not."

"I hope he will see it all as you do."

"If not, it cannot be helped. He has managed very badly. Young ladies are not usually gained by a *coup de main*. In my young days, men went thoughtfully and carefully to work, venturing on little graduated attentions, which had an infinite charm in themselves, and were skilful feelers. Whatever be Charles's disappointment, he has no one to blame but himself."

"I am so glad you think so" — this was said in her own natural manner — 'and yet it is a great shame to say so. But you do understand — don't you?'

"Of course I did, and told her so. Then she asked if I would tell Charles for her.

"I compressed my lips, laid my head on one side, and tried to look as if I were considering. 'What does mamma say?' I inquired.

"She thinks I ought to answer his letter. It is due to him, she says."

"I was of her mother's opinion. Of course, I did not see her letter, and we never recurred to the subject afterwards. Charles asked me no questions when I returned home, made no remark on Dorothy's decision, which, I knew, reached him next day, and bore his rejection with the apparent impassibility which had

characterized his wooing. He took his fellowship, and settled into a conscientious, respectable, somewhat pompous don. I do not think he ever met Dorothy subsequently."

"It was a pity for the girl, and she was evidently a nice girl," observed Jack: "and her father and mother must have been disappointed."

"No doubt. When Dalton was dying, two years later, Dorothy was very heavy at his heart. 'To think of that bright, pretty, high-spirited creature, chilled, drilled, kept under, as I have seen girls as sweet, lively, and good as she is, lacerates me,' he said to me one day. And then I told him that, with God's help, she never should be; that I had taken forethought about what would be best; and that, if Mrs. Dalton agreed, I would find the money for them to start a school for little boys, which I considered the least laborious undertaking for ladies, and she not only need not be separated from her daughters, but would be materially helped by them. His look of perfect satisfaction is among my dearest recollections."

"You're a good fellow," remarked Jack huskily.

"Not at all, Jack. I made no sacrifice, and insured myself very great happiness. They have always succeeded extremely well, and they spend their summer holidays with me; Anna, her husband, and children come at Christmas. As to the loneliness which you thought must oppress me, I know nothing about it. Of other men's hidden experience, I know nothing; but for myself, I find that, as I grow old, though I enjoy society with undiminished zest, I am more independent of it. No one is less dear to me, but all are less necessary."

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From The Saturday Review.

#### BENGAL PAST AND PRESENT.

THE newspapers have very naturally been filled with facts and speculations about the sad calamity which is said to be impending over the oldest of our East Indian possessions, and every kind of note has been sounded, from the highest falsetto to the deepest bass. Suggestions of course have been plentifully showered on the Government: some full of sound good sense; others well-meaning, but long ago acted on; others, again, childish and silly, and of about as much practical application as would be the ad-



vice tendered by a Liddesdale farmer to a vine-dresser in Spain. The tone of the daily and weekly press has, on the whole, been earnest and temperate, though here and there we have heard an utterance more like the ravings of Habakkuk Mucklewrath than the advice which ought to be tendered by those whose mission it is to brace official thought or to fashion public opinion. We propose in this paper, not gratuitously to lecture an Administration which is fully alive to the crisis, nor to harrow readers by dilating on a probable recurrence of the year which Macaulay has immortalized, but to put before them an accurate account of agricultural wants and operations in the Gangetic Delta such as they ordinarily are in an average season, and such as they cannot now be in that region until the middle of 1874.

To break up the clay or loam of Bengal, dried and baked by months of sun, to keep up the village reservoirs to their proper fulness, to prevent the smaller streams from running dry, to give the late rice plants that depth of water which converts a vast plain into one huge wet field of unbroken cultivation, and to enable the higher lands to produce two successive and distinct crops in one twelvemonth, some sixty to eighty inches of rain are almost indispensable. But Bengal, and indeed India generally, must have, to use a Biblical expression, the former and the latter rain in due season. The prospects of the finest year may be hopelessly ruined if the showers are not vouchsafed to the land at due intervals and with occasional breaks of sunshine. If an undue proportion of wet is gauged in May and June, the ryot cannot sow the best and deepest lands, or he sows them late and in haste, for the seed to rot or the young plants to be drowned. If the return of the periodical rains is delayed beyond the middle of June, the same result occurs; and before the rice can gather head, as it were, it is overtopped by a deluge in July and August, when the windows of heaven are sometimes opened for a week in succession. On the other hand, it is quite possible that everything may go on well till the middle of September. The rice sown on both high and low lands in May and June, strengthened but not overwhelmed by the heavier downfall of August, after a week or ten days of sunshine in September just wants several good inches of rain to keep the roots wet while the ear is developed. But the clouds hold off or

do not dissolve; and the richest hopes are converted to blank despair by the mere omission of half-a-dozen inches at the close of September or the beginning of October. In fact, it is perfectly possible to conceive a scarcity with seventy inches of rain all confined to June, July, and August, and a year of unusual abundance with fifty inches distributed in timely and successive falls between the 1st of June and the 15th or 20th of October. Perhaps the happiest distribution is when there is never more than a fortnight or three weeks of sunshine without rain during that period, and the worst is when all the supply is exhausted before the middle of September. Better that the dry heats of May should be prolonged till the middle of July than that moisture should cease at the very time when the rice-stalks are two and three feet in length. In the years 1844, 1848, 1851, and 1858, Bengal was saved by a timely downfall which occurred at various dates in October. In the first mentioned year the whole country exchanged dearth for plenty, or escaped a famine, by three days of rain, which began, at the very nick of time, on the 11th of October. This is exactly what has been prayed for this season by editors and statesmen, by prophets and planters, by Brahmins and Sudras, and what has not been given.

Broadly speaking, the lands of Bengal and Behar, including, of course, all the threatened districts, may be divided into two classes, the higher and drier lands which produce two crops in the year, and the deep low-lying tracts which are only fitted for rice. Though some divisions are more subject to inundation than others, and retain sheets of water for eight months out of the twelve, yet both kinds of land are constantly found in the same village and in one and the same plain. A few inches more or less of earth, a greater or less incline or outfall, an exchange of loam for sand, and of viscous clay for loam, will make all the difference between a single and a double crop in the year. Cultivation on the high levels commences in March or April, and the ground is then tilled for rice, pulse, vetches, hemp, oil seeds, some vegetables, and indigo. In the space of from ninety to one hundred and thirty days all these crops are sown, grow to perfection, and are cut and carried. No sooner is one crop disposed of than the ground is ploughed for what is called, by Anglo-Indians, the "cold-weather crop." This may be wheat, barley, chickpea (termed

*gram*), the poppy, and the coarser cereals in Behar; oats, barley, *gram*, mustard, pepper, peas, and vetches, in Bengal. These crops, if sown when the ground is still soft and moist in the end of September or October, and if benefited by the parting showers which wind up the rainy season, will do perfectly well without irrigation till they are fit to cut. In Behar indeed, and in Upper India to a much greater extent, this crop is irrigated by wells and watercourses. In Bengal we have for years seen splendid breadths of mustard, *gram*, barley, peas, and pulse, which had very little other moisture than the dews of heaven from the day the seed was put in the ground in October to the time it was reaped in March. In most years the bright, exhilarating, and not oppressive sunshine of the cold season is now and then obscured by clouds, and rain generally falls for a couple of days at any time between the middle of December and the middle of February. This visitation has nothing tropical about it. The drops descend pretty much as they do in moderate autumnal showers in England. The crops, if the rain be unaccompanied by hail, look better than ever. Ryots shiver in their scanty clothing of American or Manchester workmanship; and Englishmen encamped in the interior of districts for surveying, inspection, or sport, or for all three combined, draw round an extemporized fireplace, and dream for a day or two that their tents are pitched in Somersetshire or Cannock Chase, instead of by obscure streams and populous villages loftily named after Hindu deities or Mahomedan Nawabs.

The above statement must be understood entirely to apply to high-level lands and their crops. The winter or late crop of rice, as it is termed, occupies the land for a period rarely less than six, often eight, and sometimes even ten months in the year. The deep, marshy, clayey soil bears this one crop and none other. On it centre the hopes of the ryot, and to it is devoted as much continuity of strenuous exertion as can ever be expected from Asiatic muscles. The great object is to get the ground prepared and a good deal of this rice timely sown in May, June, or July, so that the young stalks may not be overwhelmed by a rainfall in August of six or eight inches in as many hours. Only let the stalks keep their heads above water, and they shoot upwards with the rising tide, showing that Vishnu, the preserving power in Hindu

mythology, is quite capable of coping with Shiva, the destroyer. A large portion of this crop is sown broadcast, is never weeded, and with fine sunshine above and water below, measured by inches and even by feet, turns out, in January or February, a fulness of ear and a wealth of straw which would amaze the most skilful of Lothian farmers. We have ourselves counted as many as 376 grains on one stalk, and have plucked stalks twice the length of the tallest of men. But as the rice crops are divided into high and low levels, so there is a subdivision of this later crop. In tracts neither too high nor too low, where the water continuously fills the plain to the depth of a few inches, or at most a foot, the crop is planted out by hand. It is sown in small nurseries, in places under the close personal inspection of the ryot, and removed to fields carefully ploughed, scraped, weeded, and smoothed, at any time in the months of July and August. While the rice sown broadcast is rarely weeded, but takes its chance with the lotus and other aquatic plants, that transplanted is kept free from grass and vegetation with the most scrupulous care. The importance of the late crop may be estimated from the fact that, if harvested, it alone would feed a province. The early rice may be dried up without inflicting any serious loss on the resources of a division; but a failure of the late rice generally is tantamount to a failure of the cold-weather crop also, which succeeds the early rice. The critical time in India for these two crops, as we have pointed out, is the close of the rains. All turns on their not ending too soon. They may not commence until six weeks after they are due. When they begin they may continue for three weeks, rot seeds, sweep away crops, destroy houses, flood the railways, and reduce villages to the condition of inhabited islands in an inland sea. These disasters, however grievous, are confined to certain limits, and, even if irretrievable for the time, they leave behind them legacies of silt and water which are by no means ruinous. But a sky of copper during the month of September, and the failure of the parting gift of a few inches usually bequeathed, as the Hindu thinks, by Indra the rain-god, mean simply scarcity, distress, disease, and famine over an extent of country out of which the area of Lancashire might be cut without being missed.

To see what this rich alluvial soil can display under the simple ploughs and harrows of a people who have practised

agriculture and nothing else for centuries, we should select two dates in the year—the beginning or middle of August, and the beginning of February. At the former date the rainy reason is at its height. The early rice is just ready for the harvest; the late crop is sufficiently far advanced to cover with a green carpet plains of such vast amplitude that the village bounding them on one side seems to those on the other like land on the horizon to mariners at sea. These plains are at this time converted into the best and easiest of highways, and they are traversed for perhaps two months by the boats and skiffs of the planter and the missionary, the policeman and the post. The dense foliage which shrouds the dwellings of some millions of inhabitants is decked out in the verdure and brilliancy of a second spring. Cattle, no longer at liberty to pasture anywhere, are tethered on the very few spots not occupied with a crop of some kind or other, on the very homesteads, or on the sides of the village roads. The air is saturated with moisture, and with the perfume of “heavy-blossomed bowers” and “heavy-fruited trees.” The small embankments which serve both for landmarks and pathways, overtopped by the ripening or the rising crops, are no longer visible, and the country presents two broad characteristics often for some hundred of miles. These are long waving lines of tall palms and fruit-trees, which are identical with the villages, and watery steppes between, where hardly a single acre does not contribute its quota to rent, to consumption, and to exports. The climate to an Englishman is simply detestable; but the sight of the Gangetic Delta at such an epoch is one which for completeness of husbandry, intensity of colour, and luxuriance of crops and vegetation, is not easily matched, and which can never be forgotten. The change in six months, at the commencement of February, is in its way no less striking. The cold-weather crops, not quite ready for the sickle, recall the agriculture of temperate zones; the late rice crop, in many places borne down by its own weight, lies flat on the earth, or on the top of the water, uninjured, golden, full of promise. Bullock carts, heavy with produce, make their own roads, and traverse the plains or skirt the marshes with the most perfect facility. Date-trees, cultivated not for their fruit, but for their juice, discharge the material for treacle and sugar in a steady flow. Bees of quail are flushed

in the peas and barley; snipe swarm everywhere in the rice-fields; and ducks in myriads darken the lakes and ponds, or any places where water still lies deep. The weather, though soon to be exchanged for drying winds and clouds of dust, leaves nothing to wish for or grumble at. The Zemindars are secure of their rent. The Ryots have only the prospect of harvesting the last crop of the agricultural year, and will have no more hard work to do till April, and few instalments of rent to pay before June. Englishmen are compressing as much as possible of active open-air work and enjoyment into the remainder of the cold season; fleets of native craft, under no apprehensions of cyclones or tornadoes, pierce the great and small arteries of the country; the last batch of magnificent merchant vessels has just left or is leaving the Hooghly; and, considered either from an official, a social, or a mercantile point of view, the Gangetic plains put on their best aspect, and display the most palpable evidence of their agricultural wealth.

Of course the coming February must present a picture in lamentable contrast to this. Not that Bengal will ever be reduced by failure of rains to the aridity of an African or Arabian desert. The ground, indeed, will become hard as iron, but verdure will still conceal the village, and all sorts of worthless herbage will spring up unbidden, from the copious night dews or from the slight winter's rain. But it must not be imagined that any timely fall at Christmas can enable the Ryots to recover their lost ground. The tropical downpour, which floods a vast area, has vanished with the departure of the sun to the Southern hemisphere, past recall; and under no possible combination of circumstances can it be again looked for before May or June. A couple of wet days in January may improve the barley, wheat, and pulse, and, by reviving the poppies of Behar, may make a difference of a million or two sterling in the April Budget. But not one grain of the staple commodity of the country can be put into the ground again before April, or be cut and carried before July; and when telegrams announce that the Indian Government will have to feed more than two millions of people for seven months, we must bear in mind that this unhappy period only begins from March next, and that it cannot by any possibility expire until September. Even then, under the most favourable circum-

stances for sowing, ripening, and cutting, new rice, fresh from the threshing-floors, will be no food for a weakly population kept alive on half rations during all this interval. Nothing would more infallibly produce spleen, dysentery, low fever, and divers other Indian complaints. Indeed the effects of this scarcity will be felt throughout India in more ways than one. It is grievous to think of thousands of peaceable, loyal, and industrious beings, deprived of food, of their natural occupations, and of all motive for exertion, crowding once a day round the official stores and kitchens, receiving just enough to keep soul and body together, and returning home to gaze with a look of dull resignation on their herds of lean cattle and their emaciated children. Perhaps a period of enforced idleness will demoralize a ryot of Bengal or Behar to a less extent than it would an Englishman or a Frenchman. But the effect of scanty diet and unceasing anxiety will render the population more dependent than ever on Government, and much less ready, for some time to come, to comprehend measures of progress, which mean taxation. Then it is certain, judging from the experience of former calamities, that our administrators must be alert to anticipate outrages, and that no activity can prevent an increase in certain classes of crime. Civil litigation, the recreation or political excitement of rich Zemindars and substantial sub-proprietors, will languish; but policemen will have their hands full and the criminal courts will be thronged. It may be fairly assumed, for instance, that as the pressure increases, grain merchants will live in constant dread lest their stores should be sacked by a crowd of excitable and half-famished Asiatics; that the convoys of grain sent by Government or by speculators into remote villages will have to be protected by strong detachments of guards; that the fortunate possessor of an acre of late rice or of standing barley will have to keep watch over it by night, with his sons and dependents, and even then that he may be knocked on the head by a bamboo or run through the body with a spear; that all the ornaments of women and children will be pawned to the money-lenders; that some men will die under the tyranny of caste, while others will get rid of it altogether; that native subordinates employed in the distribution of rations will have a dozen opportunities of making illicit perquisites; that future crops will be pledged before a furrow has

been turned or an atom of seed scattered; that the old stock of cattle will be sold off for half its value or left to perish from sheer want of fodder. These and similar occurrences, the result of the national character, may strain the nerves of the Administration to the utmost, and may call forth all the best and the worst qualities of the Hindu; but it is not yet necessary to paint an alarming picture of twenty-five millions perishing from hunger, or to imagine the rivers Kosai and Purnabaha choked with corpses, and the vultures and jackals gorged to repletion with the carcasses of the unburnt or unburied dead. The calamity is quite grave enough to demand our attention without any stimulus of ghastly word-painting or dismal prophecies of unutterable woe. As we have said, the scarcity must leave its mark in the bureau and the counting-house, as well as in the rice-field and the bazaar. The outlay on beneficent measures must be stinted or stopped. Grants for education, for new buildings, for increased salaries, for improved agency, must be rescinded or withheld. The whole time of Commissioners, magistrates, and their subordinates must be given to form committees, to collect materials, to store grain effectively against damage from climate and against violence by robbers, to animate the rich by personal influence and practical example, to sustain the sinking hearts of the herdsman and the cultivator, who will certainly call on the name of the Maharani for succour as they did formerly on that of the old Company.

We have endeavoured to place before our readers the probable condition of the people of some six or eight magnificent districts during the approaching time of severity and trial. But there are some considerations which afford consolation. In the first place, the means of communication, whatever may have been wildly dreamed or dogmatically asserted to the contrary, are ample. One railway has put Calcutta within eighteen hours of Patna, and it touches the Ganges at more than one place. Another avoids the long, circuitous, and dangerous passage of the Sunderbunds, and enables Government to convey stores almost to the banks of the same river, where it goes by the name of the Poddha, in less than a day. There is not a populous mart, not to say a hamlet, in any one of the threatened portions of the country, to which subsistence could not be conveyed in a week or fortnight at furthest, from rail-



way station and river bank, by the common bullock carts over the common cross roads of the country. For the next six months Bengal and Behar are just as easily traversed as Somersetshire and Wilts. We have known five hundred carts at a time, laden with molasses, to start from a populous sugar mart in the interior over a mere track on which no engineer had ever expended a penny, with the absolute certainty of reaching their destination, one hundred miles off, at the rate of ten miles a day. This season, owing to the failure of rains, the plains on either bank of the Ganges must be open to carriage traffic at an earlier period than usual, and they will continue passable to the middle or end of May. The difficulty of internal transit only begins with the periodical rains; but the Indian Government need hardly be warned to commence purchasing and storing before that date. Then, although the rice crop has failed, the cold-weather crops of cereals and pulses may take off the edge of the calamity, and even fruit may be hoped for as a means of keeping the population alive. Behar can be fed on the cereals from Upper India, and Bengal on rice from Burmah and Madras. It is a fact placed beyond question that in the pressure of 1865, the population of Dinajpore, now afflicted in a similar manner, lived for the months of May and June and part of July on the produce of their mango-trees, and staved off famine till the beginning of the harvest. Something may be expected from the liberality and kind-heartedness of the Zemindars. To tell them gravely to reside on their estates and stop the famine, to trust to the laws of supply and demand, to hazard the lives of the community on private enterprise or on national impulse, would indeed be tantamount to telling a battalion of Rajpoots or Goorkhas that they must bear the brunt of a battle while the English soldiers formed the reserve. But the pious, and in this sense well directed, feelings of Hindus and Mohammedans may fairly be called on to supplement disbursements from the general treasury, and to form, according to their means and abilities, small social centres of relief. One native gentleman, in the famine of 1866, when the poor were flocking to Calcutta, to our personal knowledge, fed, out of his own resources, some thousands of his countrymen every day for two months. And his example in a minor degree was followed by many others. Lastly, we have the satisfaction

of knowing that measures for relief are in the hands of two men the most qualified by character and experience to deal with a vast and complicated system of succour. Lord Northbrook is cautious, confident, full of activity and resource. Sir George Campbell was selected by Lord Lawrence to report on the Orissa famine, has the mechanism of Bengal well oiled and completely under his control, and is precisely in the position where his terrible energy, which is too much for some intellects in uneventful seasons, can do nothing but absolute good. Both have at their back highly-trained and high-minded subordinates, a full treasury, and ample warning. They are nobly supported by all the influence of the Indian Council and the Secretary of State, who, as we have just seen, has sanctioned by anticipation "any measures necessary for the saving of human life." If, under Providence, these men so warned, so encouraged, and so trusted, cannot solve the problem of keeping life in the bodies of even five millions, or twice five millions, of Asiatics, who can exist on rice and gruel without wanting more, the thing is hardly to be done by anything short of a direct miracle.

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From the Athenæum.

#### ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE.\*

THE Edinburgh publisher, Archibald Constable, whose name used to look so pleasant on a new work "by the author of 'Waverly,'" and whose handsome, manly, intelligent, and sympathetic face looks still more pleasant in the frontispiece to these sixteen hundred pages, called "A Memorial," was one of those honest, shrewd, persevering men who may be found here and there in every country, but who are more often to be found among Scotchmen than in any other community in the world.

Archibald Constable was born in Fife-shire nearly a hundred years ago (1774). He might have been, like his father, a well-to-do farmer, and a better-to-do factor (or land-steward), but he chose to be a bookbinder, and he was allowed to follow the bent of his inclination. He was duly apprenticed, and before his time was out had duly "fallen desperately in love with a young lady." In the too brief au-

\* *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents.* A Memorial, by his Son, Thomas Constable. 3 vols. (Edinburgh, Edmonston & Douglas.)



tobiography which prefaces the "Memo-rial," this love-passage is the prettiest episode of all. With this young lady, Archibald fell extremely early in love; but, he says, "I did not enjoy an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted till after some years of a most sincere and passionate attachment." And yet the pair married when the bridegroom was barely one-and-twenty! Throughout the period of the young Scotchman's silent love, the thought that the object of his affections might one day become his wife had the most healthy influence on his character and conduct. It was in 1794 that the personal acquaintance was formed, and what followed was done after honest fashion. There was no preliminary asking of paternal permission. The young couple first understood each other, and then, says the lover, "I announced by letters to her father the resolution we had formed." The father blessed the children, who were married in 1795; and Constable always looked on the day he wedded with Mary Willison as the happiest day of his eventful life. The lady's father, a printer, helped his son-in-law at starting in life; and, says Constable, with frank simplicity, "The result of his kind office has, I trust, not been without some advantage to the public." The enfranchised apprentice soon established himself in business "at the Cross" in Edinburgh. Over his shop was written "Scarce Old Books" and jealous fellow-tradesmen interpreted the legend as signifying "Scarce o' books"!

Constable cared not for idle unenterprising wits. He devoted his whole energies to business, and he "was specially ambitious to pick up curious and valuable works relative to the history and literature of Scotland." This ambition was gratified, and it made of Constable's shop the meeting-place of the most intellectual men of the time. Among them was the Rev. Dr. Hugh Blair; and when they remember the grave teaching of Blair's sermons, some persons may be surprised to find that the minister's own favourite reading for "amusement" was "novels and romances." But then Blair was a "Moderate" of the pre-Chalmerian era.

In 1802, Constable was selected by the projectors of the new periodical, the *Edinburgh Review*, to be its publisher. This is not to be considered the turning of the tide towards "flood" which led to fortune. At the period in question Constable had outstripped all competitors, and was at the head of Edinburgh

publishers. Soon there was associated with him Alexander Gibson Hunter, whose business letters to Constable, when the latter was absent on professional matters in London and elsewhere, were varied by such records as the following:—"Our turtle dinner turned out admirably well. . . . I cut a most distinguished figure; ate seven plates of calipash and two of calipee, besides about three of the fins. We had four kinds of madeira and claret, till half-past eleven." In another letter, the mighty Hunter writes of Mr. Longman, who was temporarily knocked up by Edinburgh life—"These Englishers will never do in our country. They eat a great deal too much and drink too little; the consequence is, their stomachs give way, and they are knocked-up of course." What used to be done "in our country," is not badly illustrated in the following incidents:—

The story is known to many, of the Forfar laird, who, in returning on horseback from a convivial party, heard himself fall into the ford that he was crossing, and called out to his servant, "John, what was that played *plash*?" and who, on another similar occasion, when his hat and wig had been blown off, indignantly refused the latter when it was restored to him, exclaiming, "John, this is no *my* wig; this is a *wat* wig!" until John rejoined, "There's nae wale o' wigs in Pitmossie muir!" and induced him to resume the dripping covering. It is told of the same worthy, that once when so far *gone* that he could go no further, his hosts, in order to satisfy an uncontrollable homeward instinct, placed him, whip in hand, upon a stone wall, with the faithful John behind him, who, after a sufficient time had passed, assisted his master to dismount, and led him off unconscious, to sleep away the effects of his carouse in a strange apartment.

Hunter's letters, at home or on business travels, never omit to record the drinking bouts. He sneers at old Lindley Murray (visited in Yorkshire) for giving a copy of his "Power of Religion," when "the power of a pint of claret or a bottle or two of the *rosé*" would have been preferred. At another English house he was better satisfied, "had a famous *crack*, and came home decently about eleven, quite sober." The taste of the Scotch seems to have been considered in the kitchen and coffee-house combined "in the garret" of the House of Commons. Hunter notices Maule, Skene, and Major Ramsay eating the steaks cooked in their presence, "and drinking a bottle of claret—kept for

the Scots members." He was also naturally affected by an incident at a dinner at Johnson's, the publisher, in St. Paul's Churchyard, at which Fuseli, Bonycastle, the mathematician, a few others, and two of the shopmen, were present. Fuseli is set down as the most conceited and self-sufficient quizz ever seen. "The two shopmen, poor devils, would not take wine, although I asked them. They even sat a considerable time after dinner, and drank nothing but table-beer—a brutal specimen of the London practice!" How drink could go hand in hand with duty, as it seems to have done in those days, is scarcely to be explained. The Scottish tipplers were, however, cautious. When port heated them, they cooled their throats with claret, and they even sat gently over the palate, so that not a drop was lost to the sense of taste. There is a significant rebuke of "the horrible guzzling of the Londoners, and no drinking." It was not the quantity they were blamed for (the Scotch drank more), but the manner of imbibing it. There was as much difference between the Scotch and the Londoners as there is between the epicure and the glutton. A Scotch minister is, in one of these chapters, given up as in a reprobate condition, for abandoning himself to censurable swallowing of toddy. He was not nice in his cups. Constable's partner, moreover, abhorred the English dinners of fifty years ago. "I am completely satisfied," he says, "that the English people have no proper genius or turn for that sort of thing, as we have in Scotland." There was, however, in those days, not only a good dinner, but "good drink," to be had by Scotchmen at the British Coffee-House, Cockspur Street—a house of call, from long previous time, for Scotchmen. The house stands unchanged in appearance, and it has a true William-the-Third look about it; but it has long ceased to be a Scotch house. In former days the heads, or representatives of the heads of the Edinburgh house invited there the Londoners with whom they had business transactions, and usually combined business with costly eating and drinking. It was found that occasional great extravagance was prudential on the part of the men of business.

Archibald Constable himself almost disappears in the crowd of these men of business by whom he is surrounded, or from whom he receives letters on subjects relating to his vocation. Whole

chapters are sometimes given to biographical sketches of these individuals, and the book accordingly contains the lives of many persons besides that of the great Edinburgh publisher. They are all worth knowing, especially the self-made men. We look with reverence on such men as Lindley and Alexander Murray, who were originally shepherd boys, and who had no school-training till after they were nine years old. In one of his letters, Murray tells Constable that "when Bruce erected a temporary observatory" near his house, on an eminence, the country people said:—"G— preserve us! The Laird's gaen mad! He sits up a' nicht keekin' at the starris!" And Murray adds, "One cannot help drawing a parallel between the savages of Abyssinia and Stirlingshire." In a letter from Constable to Murray (1806) there is this amusing reference to Brougham:—"Mr. Brougham has been very active . . . in circulating a report about the *Edinburgh Review* being to be given up; and I believe . . . he would not dislike that it should fall, whenever the 10s. 10s. a sheet is no longer an object to him." Murray, quite as practical a man as Constable, writes, at the close of the above year, affirming the certainty of England and the French Empire coming to friendly relations, a circumstance, he adds, which might lead Constable, on literary research, to Paris. Meanwhile, he cautions the publisher not to put forth any books written in coarse and mendacious spirit against Napoleon, such as abounded at the time. "Besides," says Murray, "he shoots people that write against him, and, even if he did not, they ought to be shot for such absurd stuff." From such letters as pass between Constable and Alexander Murray it is a "descent" to have to go through the details of the business transactions of the former with Longman and John Murray in London, valuable as these details are as part of the history of contemporary bibliography and literature. Why the house established by Constable, in London, was not a success, is clearly seen in one of Alexander Murray's truthful remarks:—"If you had been personally in London instead of Edinburgh, I am satisfied that your London concern would have prospered. A few raw lads put at the head of affairs change the case entirely." From trade records and chronicling of the authors and literature of Scotland, we confess our readiness to turn aside to traits of old Scotch character. One of

these we find in an octogenarian, Mr. George Paton, on whose behalf Constable wrote to the Duke of Roxburghe. Paton in his younger days came to grief through neglecting the monition of Solomon, that he who goes surety for a friend shall smart for it. Friends got him a post in the Customs, 30*l.* a year! and upon that sum he supported himself and two aged parents! In course of long years he was made rich on 50*l.* a year, out of which he saved 200*l.* as a solace for his old age, but lost the whole of it by the failure of a bank. Constable recommended this self-denying hero to the Duke of Roxburghe's charity, and alluded to the library of British Antiquities which Paton had contrived to get together book by book, each volume symbolizing much fasting on the part of the proprietor. But the book-collecting Duke, who would give hundreds of pounds for an old ballad, replied, "I believe Mr. Paton to be a very worthy man, but . . . I really cannot be of the use to him you wish me to be." Dr. Duncan Forbes had a way of collecting books that was not like honest Paton's. He simply stole those he wanted, or, as Mr. Thomas Constable daintily puts it, "he regarded the appropriation of books . . . as a justifiable spoiling of the Philistine." On one occasion he complained to Archibald Constable that his library had been plundered during his absence from home. "Ah, Doctor!" was the rejoinder, "if we all had our own, your library would be still smaller!" Dr. Duncan Forbes was not the only visitor at the Cross whose conscience was debauched by the sight of a coveted book. An anonymous individual is noticed, of whom the author says, "that whenever he appeared my father received this warning, 'The gentleman with the brown great-coat is in the gallery.'" Other men who were connected with Constable figure unpleasantly among honester colleagues. One of these was John Pinkerton that "Ishmael among archæologists," whose moral standard was pitched at the lowest level. He not only suppressed but misquoted authorities, had as much audacity as mendacity, passed off a modern ballad for a genuine antique, and, in his Preface to his "Dissertation on the Scythians or Goths," had the cool impudence to remark that "In Germany or Scandinavia, if an author were to quote falsely he would go near to bear the character of a scoundrel or a liar." Mr. T. Constable's comment on this is that Pinkerton "must have pre-

sumed too confidently on the greater lenity of his countrymen in estimating his own productions." Pinkerton must have been odious in the eyes of publishers, yet not more so than the Earl of Buchan was in the eyes of an editor to whom he *would* send his limping verses. How such presumption would now be met we need not say. Constable and the editor of the *Scots Magazine*, in 1802, took their own way with a farrago of verse which my lord sent to that periodical. They would not disoblige so great a man, and yet they would save their own honour. They did not insert the contribution in the elevated poetical department, "but placed it alone amid the prose, stating that, from respect to Lord Buchan, they had 'assigned it a conspicuous place in their Miscellany, distinct from the mass of vulgar poetry.'"

But the above, and numerous other literary incidents and sketches of the lives of eminent men, yield in interest to the illustrations of home life and of the family circle gathered round the publisher and his admirable wife. The most striking figure here is "Auntie Jean," Mrs. Constable's maiden sister, who is as good as the best of novel heroines with whom we are acquainted. In her youth and beauty, circumstances led her, Calvinist as she was, to be consigned to a convent in Picardy for her education. From this she escaped in disguise, when war broke out, carrying with her a little box of bonbons, the offering of a loving and "well lo'ed" young French gentleman. Having consumed the sweetmeats, she found a ring at the bottom of the box, an expression of hope on the part of the swain who had deposited it. The girl was well content to listen to the suit; but those were not times in which British parents would entrust the happiness of their daughters to the Gaul, and they were the times in which daughters honoured their fathers and mothers, and would rather cherish a silent sorrow than disobey their parents. So, good and fair Auntie Jean put her lover's ring on her finger, and gave ear to no other wooer. She became, as such women often are, the good genius of the family, a true human angel in the house. Slightly eccentric, her utterances were often worthy of record. Mr. Constable notices the following, addressed to himself, through the aunt's maid, when the good deaf old lady was dying,—"Ann," she said, "if I should be spared to be taken away, I hope my nephew will get the doctor to open my head, and see if anything can

be done for my hearing." The "gentle mind," says the nephew, "had already begun to waver." We confess we leave the home circle with regret, to be introduced to groups of literary men and literary women, even though Jeffrey himself, the editor of the *Edinburgh*, be among them. Assuredly, he enjoys an eminent, honourable, and well-merited place of distinction among the distinguished. Jeffrey was the very prince of editors. He never ruffled the susceptibilities or disturbed the honest self-respect of a writer in the *Review*. He could perform a disagreeable duty in a fashion to make it appear almost agreeable to the patient. One incident alone will suffice to show the metal of which Jeffrey was made. Through unintentional neglect, he had omitted to let the proprietors of the *Review* know the amount of honorarium due to a certain contributor. After discovering the omission, the honorarium was not only forwarded with graceful apology, but with an additional ten guineas of Jeffrey's own, but sent as the proprietors'. "I mulct myself in this fine," wrote Jeffrey to Constable. . . . "I deserve this for my negligence, and, besides, it is right that the *Review* and its management should not be liable to the imputation of shabbiness—even from the shabby." Parting from Jeffrey, we are once more surrounded by scholars, writers, and booksellers. The contrasts are strongly marked as when we have, on one hand, the Quaker poet, Bernard Barton, who mourned the fate that bound him to a bank desk, going on making figures till death made a cypher of him! and, on the other hand, is the flashy publisher, Sir Richard Phillips, who, resolved not to pass for a cypher even after death wrote his own epitaph, and, among a score of other fine things said of himself, set down that "as a son, husband, father, and friend, he was worthy of imitation, and left a mourning family little to inherit except a good name." Pleasanter altogether than either of them was Dr. Kitchiner, one of Constable's army of "authors." "Though a doctor," we are told "he had no faith in medicine." It would be more correct to say that "because he was a doctor he had no faith in the way people chose to take medicine." Here is as good a bit of advice gratis as ever was given by an upright sensible physician. It is from a letter to Constable, March, 1822:—

I assure you I am quite uncomfortable that you still persist in tampering with us doctors! What does a man want with medicine who can

ride ten miles without fatigue, eat plain food with an excellent appetite, has every domestic comfort to render the evenings delightful, and can sleep soundly from ten o'clock at night till four in the morning—ay, and all this in spite of the pains he takes to annoy his good and well-behaving stomach with *squills*, &c.? . . . You have a fulness in your head—and in your heart, forsooth,—well, nobody can deny that: the former is as full of good sense, and the latter of good nature, as any man's in Christendom. . . . You are enjoying actually better health than almost any man of forty-five can boast, and will long continue to do so—if you do not undermine your excellent constitution by everlastingly bothering it with physic. I am ready to swear this before my Lord Mayor and the Court of Aldermen.

There was as much generosity in the above as in Capt. Basil Hall, when Constable was in difficulty, making the publisher a present of the copyright of the three volumes of his voyages. "It is," says Constable, "the most handsome thing I ever experienced."

The last volume of this elaborate and interesting history is almost an independent work. It contains the record of the connection between Walter Scott, the Ballantynes, and the publishing house of Constable. It is partly written as a son's vindication of his father's character, his honour, and his name; and the son—we can say it with the greatest satisfaction—is successful. No blame is cast on Scott, for Scott was blameless; no reproach is cast on Ballantyne; the person chiefly censured is Lockhart, who is accused of misrepresenting circumstances. The story of the Waverly Novels is here told, from first to nearly the last; from their burst of triumph down to the ruin of that publishing firm of Constable's, which had once seemed a tower of strength, proof against all assaults, but which went down (as a gallant but unfortunate ship goes down, with her flag unstruck) in the "panic" of 1826. Those who are curious in the history of that publishing time, will find it all here. For our own part, we leave the record of triumphs, sorrows, speculations, bills, ledgers, endorsements, and so forth, to those who will follow it. We prefer to give some of the incidents as illustrations of the men and the times. And first, as an illustration of the certain fact that many a good book has been spoiled by a publisher giving it an uneffective title, in spite of the author, it may be here noticed that Constable proposed that "The Abbot" should be called "The Nun-nery." Scott replied:—"The only ob-

jection . . . is that there is neither Nun nor Nunnery mentioned in the affair from beginning to end. I remember Harry Siddons wrote a novel, which he sold to Mr. Lane, of the Minerva Press, who . . . new-christened it 'The Mysterious Bridal.' 'Saar,' as poor Harry used to say, 'there was neither mystery nor bridal in my poor book. . . . I took my own book, *Siar*, out of a circulating library for some new reading to Mrs. Siddons, and never found it out till I was far in the first volume.' " As Scott's novels appeared Constable sent a copy to Sydney Smith, who returned thanks and criticism. When "The Pirate" was published, Smith disapproved of Norna as a sort of hash-up of Meg Merrilies. He prayed for no more of Meg or Dominie Sampson, adding "All human themes have an end (except Taxation)." In those days, the volumes published in Edinburgh were sent by sea to London. Constable writes of the Ocean smack arriving in the Thames on a Sunday night, with bales of "The Fortunes of Nigel" aboard:—"The bales were got out by one on Monday morning, and before half-past ten o'clock seven thousand copies had been despatched from 99, Cheap-side." When, at a later period, Walter Scott was a partner in the trade and a sharer in the crash, he showed himself a true hero. He writes on this loss of fortune: "I feel quite composed and determined to labour. There is no remedy." And, later, again to Constable: "Be my loss lighter or heavier, I will bear it manfully. 'Woodstock' will be on the counter in a month, and you shall see that neither frost nor foul weather shall abate the spirit of . . . Walter Scott." In giving details of the catastrophe, Lockhart is charged with omitting some passages in Scott's Diary, and slightly altering others, thereby creating an impression that Scott and his publishers were on less friendly terms than was really the case. For instance, Scott wrote: "Bade Constable and Cadell farewell, and had a brisk walk with them, which enables me to face the desolation here with more spirit." Mr. Lockhart, for "a brisk walk with them," gives in the "Life," "a brisk walk home," without notice of companions. We pass on, however, to Scott's "Life of Napoleon," and may notice the following singular passage in a letter to Constable, from Mrs. Campbell:—

If, as we hear, Sir Walter Scott is writing the History of Buonaparte, you may tell him

that the late Sir Charles Stuart (of Bute) told me that when he commanded our army in Corsica, Buonaparte wished to come into our service. I asked what rank he expected; he said he believed he would have accepted a Lt.-Colonelcy. This is a fact that I know has been doubted, but you see Sir C. Stuart's authority is decisive.

The end soon came to publisher and author. In order to maintain the reputation of the latter, which needed no championship, Lockhart branded the Ballantynes as unprincipled adventurers, and ultimately sacrificed Constable & Co. to the same cause. The publisher's son has amply shown that Lockhart's zeal drove him into error. Constable himself was fully justified, as he lay on his dying bed, in saying to his son, in whose arms he may be said to have passed away, that he left him a poor man, indeed, but possessing a name which might be of advantage to him in the battle of life. The name *has* proved of value to Archibald Constable's sons, as we see by the imprint at the close of each volume:—"Printed by T. & A. Constable, Printers to Her Majesty, at the Edinburgh University Press."

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From Chambers' Journal.  
MIGRATORY BOGS.

THERE are said to be some six million acres of bog in the United Kingdom, Ireland boasting or bewailing the possession of at least a moiety of the ill-conditioned mixture Scotland coming in for a third, and England owning the remaining million of moist acres, which no one has yet managed to put to very profitable use. Fortunately for those whose lines are cast in their undesirable neighbourhood, British bogs very rarely become so impatient of quiescence as to convert themselves into movable property, and set out on their travels, as Chat Moss did in the far-away days of many-wived King Hal. Leland tells how, "bursting up within a mile of Mosley Haul, it destroyed much ground with moss thereabout, and destroyed much fresh-water fish thereabout, first corrupting with stinking water Glasbrook, and so Glasbrook carried stinking water and moss into Mersey water, and Mersey corrupted, carried the rolling moss, part to the shores of Wales, part to the Isle of Man, and some unto Ireland. And in the very top of Chateley Moor, where the moss was highest and



broke, is now a plain, fair valley as ever in times past, and a rill runneth in it, and pieces of small trees be found in the bottom." Thanks to Stephenson's genius and perseverance, Chat Moss is not likely to be guilty of another freak of the kind. We can find but one other instance recorded of bog-moving in England, and that happened in the "Debatable Land" of olden time, near the Netherby whose Græmes, Fosters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves went racing and chasing o'er Cannobie Lea, in the vain hope of catching young Lochinvar and his fair Ellen. When Pennant visited the place in 1768, he saw a beautiful tract of cultivated land; four years afterwards, he beheld nothing but a dismal swamp. The fertile vale had succumbed to Solway Moss, the sixteen hundred acres of peat-mud of which had only been kept within bounds by the hard outer crust. Ignorant, or careless of the consequences, some peat-diggers cut away part of the protecting edge of the bog; a three days' downpour came, and, unable to withstand the extra pressure, the hitherto effectual barrier yielded, and let out a river of thick black slush, carrying everything before it. It was on the night of the 17th of November 1771, that a farmer living close by the Moss, hearing an unusual noise, went out of doors, lantern in hand, to discover the meaning of it. He saw a small dark-coloured stream flowing towards him, and for the moment, fancied it came from his own dunghill; but the stream growing to a deluge, he ran as he never ran before, to rouse up all within hail, with the news that the Moss was out. Some received their first intimation of the disaster from the entrance of the "Stygian tide" into their houses; these sound sleepers had to wait for the daylight ere they escaped through the roof, with the aid of outside friends. Still there was cause for congratulation: although buildings had been swept down, cottages filled from floor to roof-tree, and four hundred acres of good land overwhelmed beyond redemption, no man, woman, or child had been done to death by the unlooked-for irruption. The cattle had not escaped so well, many beasts being suffocated in their sheds. One cow, the solitary survivor of eight, after standing up to its neck in mud and water for sixty hours, had appetite enough to eat heartily when delivered from durance, but refused to touch any water, nor would she "even look at it without manifest signs of horror."

In 1629, says Dr. Robert Chambers, in his *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, a large moss with a little lake in the middle of it occupied a piece of gradually rising ground in the fertile district between Falkirk and Sterling. A highly cultivated tract of wheat-land lay below. There had been a series of heavy rains, and the moss became overcharged with moisture. After some days, during which slight movements were visible on this quagmire, the whole moss began one night to leave its native situation, and slide gently down to the low grounds. The people who lived on these lands, receiving sufficient warning, fled, and saved their lives; but in the morning light they beheld their little farms, sixteen in number, covered six feet deep with liquid moss, and hopelessly lost. In the wet August of 1861, a farmer dwelling near the town of Slamannan, looking out from his door early one morning, beheld some twenty acres of Auchingray Moss part company with its clay bottom, and float away for three-quarters of a mile, to the utter ruin of a large quantity of arable land and potato-ground over which it spread.

Yet more extraordinary was the sight seen in the county of Limerick in 1697. The continuous rains of a very unfavourable spring getting under a large bog at Charleville, forced up its centre to a great height. Soon afterwards, sounds resembling distant thunder betokened mischief was brewing underground, the boghill sank as rapidly as it had risen, and then the entire mass was set in motion. A wide deep ditch separated it from some pasture-land, but did not prevent the bog sweeping onward with wave-like undulations, but unbroken surface, and carrying the pasture-land with it, to deposit it upon an adjoining meadow, covering it wholly with sixteen feet of soil — after which, it would be difficult, we should fancy, to decide as to ownership. The pasture became bog, and the old site of the bog was left bare, marked by an unsightly hole, throwing up "foul water and very stinking vapours." After a violent storm in March 1745, a turbary at Addergoole, near Dunmore in Galway, which the turf-cutters had only just left, began to move, and floating to a piece of low-lying pasture near the river-side, spread over a space of thirty acres. The choked river overflowed its banks, and in a very short time the fields near were hidden by a lake covering fifty acres. Before a passage could be cut

for the river, the lake had extended over three hundred acres, and a week after that operation had been effected, a fifth part of the deluged land still remained under water.

This notable event in the simple annals of Dunmore will no longer stand unparalleled in the records of the little Irish town. On the 1st of October 1873, a farmer diligently labouring in his potato-field caught sight of a brown mass making its way towards him. Leaving his spade in the ground, he ran off to fetch some neighbours. An elevated bog about three miles distant from the town had burst through its banks, descending so swiftly that by the time the frightened man got back to his potato-field, half of it was buried, and a few stocks on a high knoll were all that remained to tell where his corn-field had been. In a very short space of time, the cruel torrent had buried three farm-houses, and covered two hundred acres of valuable land with "half-concrete, half-fluid" deposit, to a depth, in some places, of ten feet, leaving a great basin of a mile and a half in circumference, from which steadily flowed a stream of very watery brown bog-stuff. At the time we write—three weeks after the outburst—this stream had attained a length of two miles, with a breadth of about a quarter of a mile, and two mil-

lions cubic feet of bog-stuff had been sent down the valley. A letter from Dunmore says: "The worst of the damage already done is that it is likely to be permanent in its effects, unless, indeed, the foreign matter continues its locomotion, and branches off to some locality where it will affect no industrial interest. As it is, a wide extent of capital land has been converted into a black swamp; several families have been ruined, not only by the loss of their holdings and homes, but by the destruction of their crops, their firing, and other property which there was not time to save. It is pitiable to see one of these ill-fated tenements surrounded by the filthy ooze of the bog, with no trace of the green fields and cheerful harvest stubble that the occupants of the deserted dwelling looked upon from its threshold only a fortnight ago."

It is consoling for those who have not suffered by the untoward action of the migratory bog to know that such calamities are of very rare occurrence. Might they not be rendered impossible? We think so. If bog-reclamation could be made as exciting as running after political jack-o'-lanterns, moving bogs would soon rank among the wonders of the past.

( A LOAN exhibition of the works of old masters has been organised in Brussels by the Société Néerlandaise de Bienfaisance." The chief feature of this exhibition is the number of works from the celebrated Suermondt collection, which has contributed no less than 120 paintings and 44 drawings. Among these we find as many as three Van Eycks, one of which, known as "L'homme à œuillet," was engraved a short time since in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*. It is one of Van Eyck's most admirable portraits. The recently discovered master, Gerard David, has a picture ascribed to him, and there are several others of the early Flemish school in this collection. The old German school is likewise represented by some of its chief masters, but as might be expected, the wealth of the exhibition lies in works of the later Netherlandish schools. Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Paul Potter (by whom we have the famous landscape of the Suermondt collection, "Bois de la Haye"), Albert Cuyp, Jan Steen, and many more of the later Dutch masters, may be studied to advantage in this small but rich exhibition. Truly the

art tourist has had a great advantage this summer in being able to view without difficulty or favour in so many of these loan exhibitions the treasures that usually lie hidden or inaccessible in the depths of private houses.

THE last number of the *Archæological Journal* contains an interesting article on "The Architecture of the Eleventh Century," by Mr. J. H. Parker, in which he maintains his previously expressed conviction that the churches of the Anglo-Saxon period in England were with few exceptions built of wood, and that it was only in the eleventh century that stone came fairly into use for building purposes. "For many years past," he writes, "I have been hunting for buildings of the tenth century with very little success. It is a matter of history that some stone buildings were erected at that time, but there is very little construction of that period remaining in any of them."